

Contents

Korowa’s Child Protection Program – An Introduction	3
Statement of Commitment from Korowa Anglican Girls’ School’s Principal and Chair of Council	3
The Korowa Child Protection Program in Context	5
Child Protection Law and Regulation in Victoria – An Overview	5
Child Abuse Definition and Key Risk Indicators	9
Child Abuse & Family Violence	9
Sexual Offences	9
Grooming	10
Physical Violence	12
Serious Emotional or Psychological Harm	13
Serious Neglect	13
Family Violence	14
Child Protection Program Glossary	15
Definitions	15
Key Definitions in Our Child Protection Program	16
Who is Responsible for Child Protection?	18
School Council	18
Principal	18
School’s Child Protection Officers	18
Staff	19
Direct Contact Volunteers	19
Indirect Contact volunteers	20
Third Party Contractors	20
External Education Providers	21
Korowa Policies Related to Korowa’s Child Protection Program	22
The Victorian Child Safe Standards	23
Korowa Child Protection Policies	27
Child Protection and Safety Policy	27
Child Safety Code of Conduct	32
Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy	35
Korowa’s Child Protection Officers Process for Making a Report	40
Role Description	40
Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse	42
Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Protection Incident	43
Reporting a Child Abuse Concern Internally	46
General Legal Obligation to ‘Act to Protect’ and to Report Child Abuse	47
The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence	47
The Obligation to Act to Protect	48
Mandatory Reporting Policy	50
Notifying Reportable Conduct Policy	54
Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Child	59
Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching	60
Communication with Parents/Guardians	62
Support for Students Interviewed at the School	62
Making Additional Reports	63
Child Protection Complaints Management	64
Confidentiality and Privacy	65
Child Protection Record Keeping	66
Creating and Maintaining a Child Safe Environment	69
Child Safety Human Resources Practices	69
Child Safe Recruitment Practices	69
Working with Children Checks Policy	70
Child Protection Training	74
Cultural Awareness of Child Protection Issues	75
Staff and Student Professional Boundaries	75

Participation and Empowerment of Children.....	75
Student Wellbeing – Child Protection	76
Students with a Disability	76
Cultural Diversity Policy	76
Disability Discrimination Policy.....	77
Child Protection Risk Management	80
Additional Resources	82
Korowa Child Protection Procedures.....	83
Reporting Procedures.....	83
Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and School Council Members.....	83
Staff Response in the Korowa Context.....	87
Other Members of the Community (Indirect Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Parents).....	88
Students	89
Vexatious Claims	89
Retrospective Claims.....	89
Recruitment Practices	90
Child Safe Recruitment Checklist – Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.....	90
Position Descriptions for Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff	93
Applicant Background Check Declaration	93
Procedures for Visitors to the School (Indirect Contact Volunteers, External Education Providers and Third Party Contractors).....	94
Indirect Contact Volunteers and External Education Providers	94
Third Party Contractors.....	95
Training.....	96
Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and School Council Members.....	96
Child Protection Officers	96
Families	96
Students Over the Age of 18	97
Student Empowerment (Curriculum and Other Activities)	97
International Students.....	97
Homestay Families, Legal Guardians and Korowa Agents.....	97
Provider Declaration	98
Responding to suspected child abuse: template for Victorian schools.....	99

Korowa's Child Protection Program – An Introduction

Statement of Commitment from Korowa Anglican Girls' School's Principal and Chair of Council

Korowa Anglican Girls' School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Korowa has zero tolerance for child abuse. Korowa is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. Every person involved in Korowa Anglican Girls' School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Korowa Anglican Girls' School will:

Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety

Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives

Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children

Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount

Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children

Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development

Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues

Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities

Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk

Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence.

Korowa has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse. At Korowa, a child includes Korowa Students, visiting students and exchange students.

This Child Protection Program is made up of work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to maintain a child safe environment and to embed an organisational culture of child safety within the School community. The Program deals specifically with child protection issues and is designed to ensure compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related child protection laws. Broader child safety issues arising from our common law duty of care are dealt with through our Student Duty of Care Program.

If you have a belief or suspicion that a child is being, or has been, subjected to any form of abuse you must contact the Victorian Child Protection Service or, where you need guidance on making a report or have questions regarding child safety, contact one of the School's appointed Child Protection Officers. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.



Helen Carmody
Principal



John Harker
Chair of Council

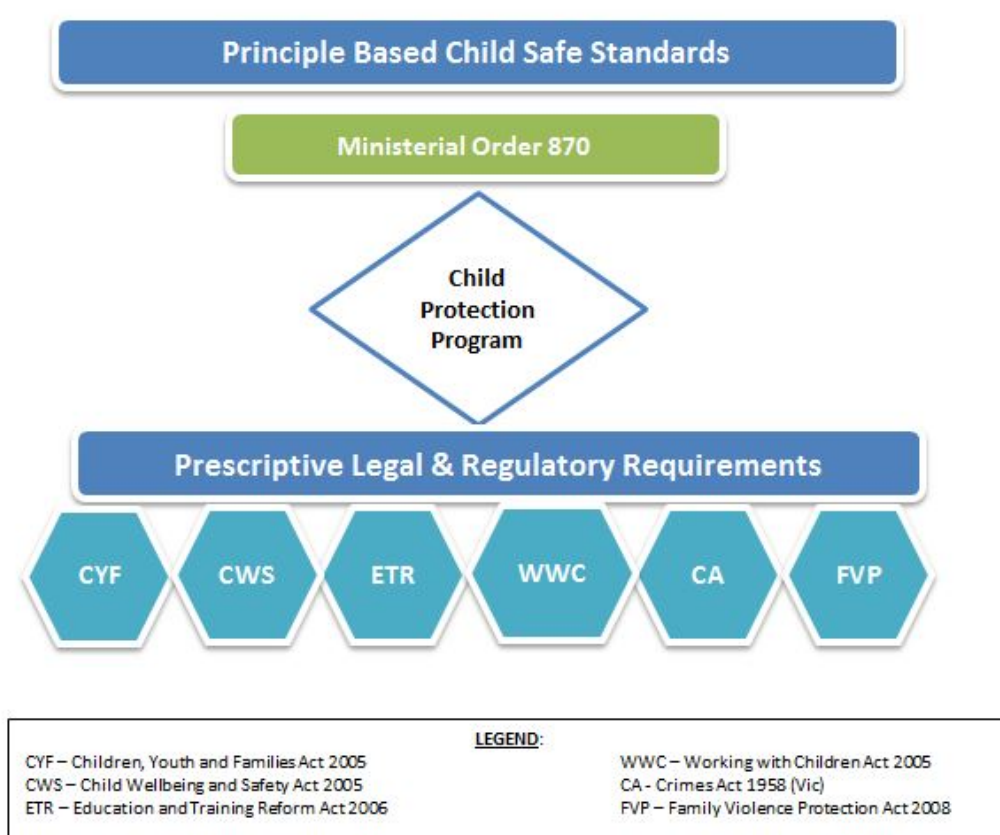
The Korowa Child Protection Program in Context

Child Protection Law and Regulation in Victoria – An Overview

The legal and regulatory framework for child protection in Victoria is made up of a complex web of laws, regulations and guidance notes.

This diagram and the commentary below provides an overview of the framework.

Victoria’s New Child Protection Framework Overview



Victorian Child Safe Standards

At the top of the diagram are the **Victorian Child Safe Standards**. These Standards are designed to improve the way all organisations that provide services to children, including schools, prevent and respond to child abuse. These Standards are 'principle based' laws which means that, whilst they have the force of law, how the Standards are applied in practice is open to interpretation and will depend largely on the size, nature and complexity of the organisation that is seeking to comply with the Standards.

To provide a higher level of guidance for schools the Minister of Education has published *Ministerial Order 870* under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) that contains requirements that all registered schools must meet to comply with each of the Child Safe Standards. A copy of the Ministerial Order is available:

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/ChSafMINOrder8702.pdf>

The next section of this program sets out each of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and how we comply with each Standard at Korowa as required by the Minister of Education.

Prescriptive Legal & Regulatory Requirements

Below the diagram there are six separate pieces of legislation that work together to make up the legal and regulatory framework for child protection in Victoria. They are in summary:

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

The Children, Youth and Families Act has many functions including:

- establishing the 'child's best interests' principle
- regulation of community services and care providers
- the management of child protection responses
- children in need of therapeutic treatment if exhibiting sexually inappropriate behaviour
- promoting stability in care arrangements

For the purpose of our Child Protection Program the Children, Youth and Families Act is important because it establishes obligations with respect to Mandatory Reporting.

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act is a companion piece of legislation to the Children, Youth and Families Act.

Its primary function is to provide for the establishment of various government bodies that oversee the Victorian child and family services system.

For the purpose of the Korowa Child Protection Program, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act is important for three reasons:

- it provides the Statutory Definition of Child Abuse
- it is the Act through which the Victorian Child Safe Standards are created
- it is the Act through which the Reportable Conduct Scheme in Victoria is established

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

From a child safety perspective, the key functions of the Education and Training Reform Act are to:

- require schools to notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) when a school has taken action against a teacher
- make compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards a requirement for registration of all Victorian schools

Working with Children Act 2005

The Working with Children Act establishes a framework to screen the criminal records and the professional conduct of people who intend to work with or care for children.

People who are assessed as posing an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children will fail the Working with Children Check and the Act prohibits these people from working with children.

The Act imposes penalties for schools and individuals that do not comply with the Act.

Crimes Act 1958

The Crimes Act in Victoria sets out a number of child protection related offences including those relating to indecent acts and persistent sexual abuse.

Of key relevance to the Victorian child protection framework are the offences of:

- Grooming – which targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child
- Failure to protect a child – which requires people in authority within a school to take action to protect children where they know that a person associated with the school poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing a child
- Failure to Disclose – which applies to all adults, not just professionals who work with children, and requires them to report to the Police where they hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child in Victoria

Family Violence Protection Act 2008

Finally, the Family Violence Protection Act is designed to maximise safety for children and adults who have experienced family violence and forms a key part of the overall legal and regulatory framework for child protection in Victoria.

Critically the Act provides an extensive definition of 'family violence' that includes behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of such behaviour.

Wrongs Act 1958

The Wrongs Act is the principal legislation governing claims for damages for economic and non-economic loss arising from personal injury and death in Victoria, as a result of negligence or fault. It is through this Act that child abuse victims may claim compensation for loss arising from child abuse.

Critically, Section 91 of the Wrongs Act imposes a duty of care on schools to take reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child under its care, supervision or authority, by an individual associated with the school. In the school. If the school is involved in a proceeding under the Wrongs Act, the school is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove, on the balance of probabilities, that it took reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse.

Whether or not a school took reasonable precautions will be assessed by a court in accordance with considerations set out in the Wrongs Act and case law. The effective implementation of Korowa's risk management strategies is an example of taking reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child.

It is important to note that the operation of section 91 is subject to section 5.4.10 of the Education and Training Reform Act which states that Korowa will not have a duty relating to the care or control of a student while that student is employed under an approved work experience arrangement, structured workplace arrangement or an apprentice contract.

Korowa's Child Protection Program

In order to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards as well as each of the six separate items of legislation noted above, Korowa has established the Korowa Child Protection Program which sets out our work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to ensure compliance, and develop a child safe culture.

Child Abuse Definition and Key Risk Indicators

Child Abuse & Family Violence

Child Abuse

Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) as including:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or a grooming offence listed in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- the infliction of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm
- the serious neglect of a child

A child is defined by the Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Family Violence

Whilst the term 'family violence' does not form part of the official definition of 'child abuse', the impact of family violence on a child is commonly referred to as a form of child abuse.

In Victoria section 5 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) defines 'family violence' as behaviour by a person towards a family member that is:

- physically or sexually abusive
- emotionally or psychologically abusive
- economically abusive
- threatening
- coercive
- in any other way controlling or dominating the family member and causes them to feel fear for their own, or other family member's safety or wellbeing

Behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of such behaviour also falls within the definition of 'family violence'.

Sexual Offences

A sexual offence occurs when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to the child's age and development. Children may be bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity.

Sexual abuse can involve a wide range of sexual activity and may include fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exploitation through pornography or prostitution as well as grooming behaviour.

Possible Physical Indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- injury to the genital or rectal area, such as bruising or bleeding
- vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge
- discomfort in urinating or defecating
- presence of foreign bodies in vagina and/or rectum
- inflammation or infection of genital area
- sexually transmitted diseases
- pregnancy, especially in very young adolescents
- bruising and other injury to breasts, buttocks or thighs
- anxiety related illnesses such as anorexia or bulimia
- frequent urinary tract infections

Possible Behavioural Indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- the student discloses sexual abuse
- persistent and age inappropriate sexual activity, including excessive masturbation, masturbation with objects, rubbing genitals against adults, playing games that act out a sexually abusive event
- drawings or descriptions in stories that are sexually explicit and not age appropriate
- a fear of home, a specific place, a particular adult, or excessive fear of men or of women
- poor or deteriorating relationships with adults and peers
- poor self-care/personal hygiene
- regularly arriving early at school and leaving late
- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis
- frequent rocking, sucking or biting
- sleeping difficulties
- reluctance to participate in physical or recreational activities
- regressive behaviour, such as bedwetting or speech loss
- sudden accumulation of money or gifts
- unplanned absences or running away from home
- delinquent or aggressive behaviour
- depression
- self-injurious behaviour, including drug/alcohol abuse, prostitution, self-mutilation, or attempted suicide
- sudden decline in academic performance, poor memory and concentration
- wearing of provocative clothing, or layers of clothes to hide injuries
- promiscuity

Student-to-Student Sexual Offending

Unwanted sexual behaviour towards a student by a child 10 years or over can constitute a sexual offence and is referred to as a student-to-student sexual offence. All incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending must be responded to in accordance with the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse.

Grooming

Grooming refers to predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. It is a sexual offence under section 49B of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) carrying a maximum 10-year term of imprisonment.

Grooming behaviour typically involves a graduation from attention giving and non-sexual touching to increasingly more intimate and intrusive behaviour.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity. For example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with a child, a parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

Certain behaviours or acts will not in isolation constitute grooming behaviour. However, where there is a repeating pattern of indicative behaviour, or several incidents of indicative behaviour, it may constitute grooming behaviour.

Online Grooming

The sexual offence of grooming includes online grooming which occurs when an adult (18 years or over) uses electronic means to communicate with a child under the age of 16 in a predatory fashion to try and lower the child's inhibitions, or heighten their curiosity regarding sexual behaviour or activity, with the aim of eventually meeting them in person for the purposes of sexual activity. This can include communications through social media, online chat rooms, sexting or emails.

Possible Indicators of Adult Grooming Behaviour:

- persuading a child or group of children that they have a special relationship
- asking a child to keep the relationship to themselves
- inappropriately allowing a child to overstep the rules
- testing boundaries, for example by undressing in front of a child
- manoeuvring to get or insisting on uninterrupted time alone with a student
- buying a student gifts
- insisting on physical affection such as hugging, wrestling or tickling even when the student clearly does not want it
- being overly interested in the sexual development of a student
- taking a lot of photos of a student
- engaging in inappropriate or excessive physical contact with a student
- sharing alcohol or drugs with a student
- making inappropriate comments about a student's appearance or excessive flattery
- using inappropriate pet names
- making jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature
- making obscene gestures or using obscene language
- sending correspondence of a personal nature via any medium
- inviting, allowing, or encouraging students to attend a staff member's home without parental/guardian permission
- entering change rooms or toilets occupied by students when supervision is not required or appropriate
- communicating with a child's parent/step parent, legal guardian, teacher, religious official or spiritual leader with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct
- inappropriately extending a relationship outside of work
- photographing, audio recording, or filming students via any medium without authorisation or having parental consent to do so

Possible indicators That a Child May Be Subject to Grooming:

- developing an unusually close relationship with an adult
- displaying significant mood changes, including hyperactive, sensitive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn or depressed behaviour
- using 'street' or different language they learned from a new or older 'friend'
- having new jewellery, clothing, expensive items or large amounts of money that were gifts from a new or older 'friend'
- using a new mobile phone excessively to make calls, videos or send text messages to a new or older 'friend'
- being excessively secretive about their use of social media or online communications
- frequently staying out late or overnight with a new or older 'friend'
- being dishonest about where they have been or who they were with
- drug and alcohol use
- being picked up in a car by a new or older 'friend' from home or school or 'down the street'

Possible indicators That a Child May Be Subject to Online Grooming:

- discovery of pornography on their computer or device
- receiving or making calls to unrecognised numbers
- increasing or excessive amount of time spent online
- increased secrecy in what they are doing online and efforts to try and hide what they are doing online
- evidence of people on their 'friends' list that are unknown and they have never met them offline

What Is Not Grooming?

Not all physical contact between a student and a staff member or any person engaged by the school to provide services to children, including a volunteer, will be inappropriate and/or an indicator of possible grooming behaviour. The following physical contact with students is not grooming behaviour:

- administration of first aid
- supporting students who have been hurt
- non-intrusive gestures to comfort a student who is experiencing grief, loss or distress (i.e. a hand on the upper arm or upper back)
- non-intrusive touching (i.e. shaking a student's hand or a pat on the back)

Physical Violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways including beating, shaking, burning or using weapons (such as belts and paddles).

Possible Physical Indicators of Physical Violence:

- unexplained bruises
- bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, including back, bottom, legs, arms or inner thighs
- any bruises or welts in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury, for example fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth
- burns that show the shape of the object used to make them, such as an iron, grill, cigarette, or burns from boiling water, oil or flames
- fractures of the skull, jaw, nose or limbs, especially those not consistent with the explanation offered or with the type of injury probable/possible at the child's age and development
- cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears or external genitalia
- human bite marks
- bald patches where hair has been pulled out
- multiple injuries, old and new

Possible Behavioural Indicators of Physical Violence:

- inconsistent or unlikely explanation for an injury
- inability to remember the cause of an injury
- fear of specific people
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions (such as long sleeved tops) to hide injuries
- wariness or fear of a parent/guardian and reluctance to go home
- no reaction or little emotion displayed when hurt
- little or no fear when threatened
- habitual absences from school without explanations (the parent/guardian may be keeping the child away until signs of injury have disappeared)
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative
- fearfulness when other children cry or shout
- unusually nervous or hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self and/or others
- excessively friendly with strangers
- regressive behaviour, such as bed wetting or soiling
- poor sleeping patterns, fear of dark, nightmares
- sadness and frequent crying
- drug or alcohol misuse
- poor memory and concentration

- suicide attempts
- academic problems

Serious Emotional or Psychological Harm

Serious emotional or psychological abuse may occur when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats or the witnessing of family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological harm could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Psychological or emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

Possible Physical Indicators of Serious Emotional or Psychological Harm:

- speech disorders
- delays in emotional, mental or even physical development
- physical signs of self-harming

Possible Behavioural Indicators of Serious Emotional or Psychological Harm:

- exhibiting low self-esteem
- exhibiting high anxiety
- overly compliant, passive or undemanding behaviour
- extremely demanding, aggressive, or attention-seeking behaviour
- anti-social, destructive behaviour
- low tolerance or frustration
- unexplained mood swings
- self-harming
- behaviours that are not age appropriate, for example, overly adult (parenting of other children), or overly infantile (thumb sucking, rocking, wetting or soiling)
- fear of failure, overly high standards and excessive neatness
- depression, or suicidal thoughts
- running away
- violent drawings or writing
- contact with other students forbidden

Serious Neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible Physical Indicators of Serious Neglect:

- consistently dirty and unwashed
- consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- consistently without adequate supervision and at risk of injury or harm
- consistently hungry, tired and listless, falling asleep in class, or malnourished
- unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care
- inadequate shelter and unsafe or unsanitary conditions
- abandonment by parents
- poor hygiene

Possible Behavioural Indicators of Serious Neglect:

- begging or stealing food
- gorging when food is available
- inability to eat when extremely hungry
- alienated from peers, withdrawn, listless, pale, and thin
- aggressive behaviour
- delinquent acts, for example, vandalism, drug or alcohol abuse
- little positive interaction with parent/guardian
- appearing miserable or irritable
- poor socialising habits
- poor evidence of bonding, or little stranger anxiety
- indiscriminate with affection
- poor, irregular or non-attendance at school
- staying at school long hours
- self-destructive
- dropping out of school
- taking on an adult role of caring for a parent
- misusing alcohol or drugs
- academic issues

Family Violence

In Victoria 'family violence' is a defined term under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. It is a criminal offence.

Family violence is behaviour towards a family member that may include:

- physical violence or threats of violence
- verbal abuse, including threats
- emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial and social abuse

When dealing with children it is important to remember that 'family violence' extends to behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of 'family violence'.

As family violence can result in one or more forms of child abuse (being sexual offences, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect) the physical and behavioural indicators of these types of abuse may also be indicative of a family violence situation.

Possible behavioural indicators for older children and young people may also include:

- moving away or running away from the family home
- entering a relationship early to escape the family home
- experiencing violence in their own dating relationships
- involvement in criminal activity
- alcohol and substance abuse

Child Protection Program Glossary

Definitions

A full list of definitions for *Ministerial Order 870* is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe.

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 safety 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.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- 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)

School staff means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
- employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act) in the government teaching service
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- a minister of religion¹
- school governing authority means:
- the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor
- the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act
- the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act

There is a wide variety of school governance arrangements. Depending on the way a school is constituted and operated, the governing body for a school may be the school board, the school council, or some other person or entity. The school governing authorities may share or assign responsibility for discharging the requirements imposed by this Order, in accordance with the school's internal governance arrangements.

¹ **Minister of religion** has the same meaning as in the Working with Children Act 2005.

Key Definitions in Our Child Protection Program

Direct Contact Volunteers

Direct Contact Volunteers are volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

Direct Contact Volunteers may have:

- limited supervision by School staff in their role
- significant amounts of 1:1 time with students
- supervisory responsibility for a group of students with only broad and indirect oversight of a School staff member
- full supervisory responsibility for one or more students, such as in a sports coaching role or learning support role

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in School camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams, assisting in learning activities or administrative roles.

Refer to Direct Contact Volunteers' Responsibilities for more information.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with School administrative functions.

Refer to Indirect Contact Volunteers' Responsibilities for more information.

Direct Contact Contractors

Direct Contact Contractors are third party contractors who have direct contact with students during the normal course of their work or contractors who may be in a position to establish a relationship of trust. This also includes any contractors whom a school is legally required to screen.

The definition of 'direct contact' included under Direct Contact Volunteers applies to Direct Contact Contractors.

Examples of Direct Contact Contractor activities may include tutors, sports coaches, casual teachers, external third party speakers and examination invigilators.

Refer to Third Party Contractors' Responsibilities for more information.

Indirect Contact Contractors

Indirect Contact Contractors are third party contractors who are not Direct Contact Contractors.

Refer to Third Party Contractors' Responsibilities for more information.

Where the term "Third Party Contractor" is used, it captures both "Direct Contact Contractors" and "Indirect Contact Contractors." Refer to Third Party Contractors' Responsibilities for more information.

Where the term "Volunteer" is used, it captures both "Direct Contact Volunteers" and "Indirect Contact Volunteers."

Who is Responsible for Child Protection?

Society as a whole shares responsibility for promoting the safety and protection of children from abuse. In the School context, all members of the School community have their role to play – teachers, staff, administrators, parents/guardians, volunteers and students. That said, the School Executive Team are committed to leading from the front and engaging in a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child protection issues.

Students are encouraged to take an active role in developing and maintaining a child safe environment at the School and are provided with opportunities to contribute and give feedback in the development of the School's policies and practices. Students are also made aware of the avenues available to them to report or disclose abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of others.

In the Korowa context, Key Child Protection Roles & Responsibilities include:

School Council

The School Council is required to approve the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and to ensure the Child Protection Program is being effectively implemented. Each member must:

- acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of child protection matters
- have an understanding of the nature of the School's operations and the child protection risks associated with these operations
- ensure that the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement its Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Program
- ensure that the School has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding child protection issues and is able to respond in a timely way to that information
- ensure that the School has, and implements processes to ensure that the School is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child protection
- ensure that the School has, and implements processes to ensure ongoing monitoring to verify the provision and use of the resources that have been allocated to the management of child protection issues within the School and their effectiveness

Principal

The School Council delegates day-to-day management of the School to the Principal.

The Principal is ultimately responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that:

- the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Program are implemented effectively with available resources effectively deployed
- appropriate School Child Protection Officers are appointed and trained
- a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the School
- any child protection incidents arising are dealt with professionally and in a timely manner
- the School's Council receives regular reports with respect to child protection matters
- the School is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child protection

School's Child Protection Officers

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Protection Officers. The names, positions, contact details and Child Protection Officer responsibilities for all School Child Protection Officers can be found on page 40.

In the event that one of the School's Child Protection Officers cannot perform their role, for example due to conflicts of interest or absence, these duties must be performed by either another School Child Protection Officer or the Principal.

Staff

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct, our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. All staff are required to complete training allocated to them to ensure their understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

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 the School's Child Protection Officers and/or with external agencies where required.

Direct Contact Volunteers

Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers that are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

Direct Contact Volunteers may have:

- limited supervision by School staff in their role
- significant amounts of 1:1 time with students
- supervisory responsibility for a group of students with only broad and indirect oversight of a School staff member
- full supervisory responsibility for one or more students, such as in a sports coaching role or learning support role

All Direct Contract Volunteers are required to have a valid Working With Children Check.

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in School camps or excursions, coaching sporting teams, guest speakers or assisting in learning activities.

All Direct Contact Volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

They must also be aware that they too have legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

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 the School's Child Protection Officers and/or with external agencies where required.

Indirect Contact volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with School administrative functions

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment and are required to have a valid Working With Children Check

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

Third Party Contractors

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches, guest speakers, exam invigilators, employees engaged by the Korowa Parents Association to manage the Uniform Shop and School cleaners. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

In this Child Protection Program, Third Party Contractors are classified as either "Direct Contact Contractors" or "Indirect Contact Contractors".

Direct Contact Contractors

Direct Contact Contractors are:

- those who have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of their work
- those who may be in a position to establish a relationship of trust with a student; notwithstanding that unsupervised access to students would be rare (for example full-time maintenance personnel)
- any contractors whom a school is legally required to screen.

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

All Direct Contract Contractors are required to have a valid Working With Children Check.

Indirect Contact Contractors

These are contractors who have no contact with students as part of their role or undertake roles where students are not reasonably expected to be present. E.g. those contractors who complete work during school holidays. This type of contractor also includes contractors who are engaged in emergencies where there is insufficient time to undertake relevant child-safety checks.

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program. Where Third Party

Contractors are engaged at short notice, making it impractical to undertake normal screening and/or briefing sessions, the School will take reasonable steps to ensure the protection of children at the School while the work is being completed.

All Indirect Third Party Contractors who provide onsite goods and services engaged by the School must be registered through SAMS4Schools and a requirement of this registration is acknowledgment of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct as well as a record of their Working With Children Checks.

External Education Providers

An external education provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School.

The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program. Korowa may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

All External Education Providers are required to supply the School with a completed Child Safe Declaration confirming they have read and understood our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct and agree to abide by their contents. All employees of the External provider who attend onsite must provide the School with a valid Working With Children Check.

Korowa Policies Related to Korowa's Child Protection Program

The policies set out below form part of the Korowa Student Duty of Care Program and other related Korowa policies. They also support Korowa's Child Protection Program and the School's commitment to a zero tolerance for any forms of child abuse.

Korowa and its Staff owe a duty to take care of students whilst they are involved in School activities, or are present for the purposes of a School activity. This duty of care is non-delegable.

There are a number of Korowa Policies that support Staff in discharging this duty of care and will support Staff in their duty to protect children from harm. The full list of these policies is contained in our Student Duty of Care Program.

Student Welfare & General Safety

- Access Arrangements for Separated Parents/Guardians
- Counselling Services (Student)
- Disability Discrimination

Student Health

- Eating Disorders
- First Aid
- Health Centre
- Medical Appointments
- Wellbeing Profile/Management Plan (High Risk Students)
- Medical Records
- Self-Harming Behaviours

Building & Grounds Safety

- Security (Physical)

Student Behaviour

- Alcohol (Student Use Of)
- Assault (Student Against Student)
- Attendance Requirements for Students
- Bullying Prevention & Intervention
- Cyber Safety
- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Drugs - Illicit (Student Use Of)
- Information & Communication Technology
- Mobile Phones (Student Use Of)
- Unauthorised Absence

Extracurricular Activities

- Excursions Policy and supporting Risk Management Plans
- Student Exchange Policy

Managing Third Parties

- Contractor Management
- Visitor Management
- Volunteer Management

Privacy Policy

The Victorian Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Child Safe Standards compromise seven (7) Standards and three (3) Principles.

The seven (7) Standards are as follows:

Standard 1	Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
Standard 2	A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
Standard 3	A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
Standard 4	Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
Standard 5	Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
Standard 6	Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
Standard 7	Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

In addition to the seven (7) Standards, the School is required to take into consideration the following three (3) Principles as part of our response to each Standard:

Principal 1	promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
Principal 2	promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
Principal 3	promoting the safety of children with a disability

To assist organisations to interpret each of the Standards, the Victorian Government has published a guide entitled 'An overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards'. In addition, the Minister for Education has published *Ministerial Order 870* that prescribes certain matters with which registered schools in Victoria must comply as part of their registration requirements.

Korowa has established and implemented our Child Protection Program in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

The table below sets out each Standard with a summary of how we comply with that Standard.

Standard	Short Description	How Korowa Applies this Standard
1	Organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements	<p>Korowa complies with this Standard in a number of ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the development of this Child Protection Program, our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code Of Conduct ▪ the appointment of senior staff members as the School's Child Protection Officers who act as 'Child Protection Champions' and are tasked with the overall responsibility for embedding an organisational culture of child protection in the School ▪ each School Council member, staff member and Direct Contact Volunteer having to complete Child Protection Training which provides information with respect to key risk indicators of child abuse and reporting procedures ▪ establishing clear guidelines for reporting child abuse concerns ▪ creating an environment supportive of children from culturally diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities
2	A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety	<p>Korowa has developed and implemented a Child Protection and Safety Policy that describes the key elements of our approach to child protection as well as an overarching set of principles guiding the development of policies and procedures to protect children from child abuse.</p> <p>Our Child Protection and Safety Policy is published through various mediums including our public website.</p>
3	A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children	<p>Korowa has created a plain English Child Safety Code of Conduct which specifies appropriate standards of behaviour for adults towards students in all School environments, including outside of school hours.</p>

4	Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel	<p>Korowa has created child safe human resources practices including those relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment, Selection & Screening ▪ Our Working with Children Checks Policy ▪ Child Protection Training ▪ Cultural Awareness of Child Protection Issues
5	Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse	<p>Korowa has established simple and accessible procedures for anyone to report a child abuse concern internally to one of the School's Child Protection Officers.</p> <p>Korowa has developed and implemented procedures for School Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers for responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse, or suspected child abuse, including procedures for support following a disclosure by a student. Refer to our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse.</p> <p>Reporting procedures for third party contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, parents/guardians and other community members are included in our Child Protection and Safety Policy which is available on our public website.</p> <p>Age appropriate reporting procedures for students are developed through our student wellbeing program.</p>
6	Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse	<p>The School has adopted a risk management approach to child safety. Key risk indicators of child abuse are documented in our Child Protection Program and also included in our Child Protection Training.</p> <p>The School has developed a number of strategies, policies and procedures to create a risk-based approach to child safety and protection. Refer to Child Protection Risk Management.</p>
7	Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children	<p>Korowa has developed strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children including policies and procedures related to age appropriate student wellbeing and supporting children with disabilities and children from culturally diverse backgrounds.</p>

Principle of Inclusion

In addition to implementing the Standards, the School implements principles of inclusion prescribed by the Standards and *Ministerial Order 870* through our:

- Disability Discrimination Policy
- Cultural Diversity Policy

These policies address the three (3) Principles in addition to our response to each Standard. Korowa is committed to ensuring that the needs of all students including but not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities or who are vulnerable are taken into account when the School develops and implements its Child Protection Program.

We understand that allegations of abuse that involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from diverse backgrounds or children with disabilities will require varied and particular responses to ensure that appropriate action is taken. The School provides training for all of our School Child Protection Officers that specifically covers how to make a culturally appropriate and sensitive response to allegations of abuse in order to overcome any impairments or barriers culturally diverse students or students with a disability may face.

Korowa Child Protection Policies

Child Protection and Safety Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Korowa is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

At Korowa we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Child Safe Principles

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, Direct Contact Volunteers*, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all School Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support

*Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in School camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams, guest speakers, exam invigilators or assisting in learning activities.

Objectives

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the School
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the School
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria

Child Protection Program

Korowa is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

1. clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
2. clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
3. strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
4. procedures for recruiting and screening School Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers
5. student wellbeing strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
6. policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities
7. a child protection training program
8. information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
9. guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
10. policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
11. a system for continuous improvement and review

As a part of Korowa's induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.

All staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and School Council members are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers are supported and supervised by the School's Child Protection Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child protection.

Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Korowa all members of the School Council and staff, as well as direct and indirect volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

School Council

Each member of the School Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal and School Executive accountable for effective implementation.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the School's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the School.

The School's Child Protection Officers

The Deputy Principal, the School Chaplain, the ELC Co-ordinator and the School Counsellor have been nominated as the School's Child Protection Officers. Our Child Protection Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in co-ordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Staff Members

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. 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 the School's Child Protection Officers.

Direct Contact Volunteers

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

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 the School's Child Protection Officers.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers (or 'Indirect Volunteers') are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. All Indirect Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All Indirect Volunteers are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with School administrative functions or guest speakers.

Third Party Contractors

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches guest speakers, exam invigilators, employees engaged by the Korowa Parents Association to manage the Uniform Shop and school cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

The School only uses Third Party Contractors that have undergone an extensive due diligence process which includes provision of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Direct Contact Contractors

Direct Contact Contractors are:

- those who have direct contact** with students during the normal course of their work
- those who may be in a position to establish a relationship of trust with a student notwithstanding that unsupervised access to students would be rare (for example full-time maintenance personnel)
- any contractors whom a school is legally required to screen

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

Indirect Contact Contractors

Indirect Contact Contractors are those contractors who do not meet the definition of "Direct Contact Contractor". Refer to Third Party Contractors' Responsibilities for more information.

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

The School only uses third party contractors that have undergone an extensive due diligence process which includes provision of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

External Education Providers

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment. All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program. Korowa may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

Reporting Concerns

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for members of the School Council, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, students, parents/guardians or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

Our Child Protection Officers may be contacted via the Main School Reception on 9811 0200. Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis' and all Personal Information will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Privacy Policy.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Risk Management Program
- Compliance Program
- Human Resources Program
- Student Duty of Care Program
- Occupational Health & Safety Program
- Child Protection Staff Training
- Recruitment & Selection Procedures
- Induction Procedures

Policy & Program Review

Korowa is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

This Policy will be reviewed in June 2018

Child Safety Code of Conduct

A Child Safety Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. For more detailed guidance refer to the School's Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the School environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

The Code is made available to all staff, volunteers, families and students.

The Child Protection Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff
- volunteers (of all types)
- students
- parents and guardians
- third Party Contractors and service providers (including External Education Providers)
- members of the School Council
- teaching students on placement at the School
- visitors

Korowa Child Safety Code of Conduct

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the School environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, Korowa may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

The School reviews the Code annually and it is due for review in June 2018.

Korowa has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students within our School community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, School Council members, volunteers (direct and indirect), Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers and parents/guardians.

DO

- Behave as a positive role model to students
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and child protection issues
- Provide age appropriate supervision for students
- Comply with guidelines published by the School with respect to child protection
- Treat all students with respect
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students
- Use positive and affirming language toward students
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and then listen to them with respect
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way
- Report any breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the School's Child Protection Officers, namely our Deputy Principal, Head of Junior School, the School Chaplain, the ELC Co-ordinator and the School Counsellor
- Ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know
- Handle Personal Information in accordance with the School's Privacy Policy

DO NOT

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm
- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students)
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student

- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/guardian consent
- Post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse

Our Child Protection Program includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy that provides detailed guidance for all staff and volunteers (direct and indirect) on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at Korowa.

Report Any Concerns

The Program also includes information for members of the School Council, Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, students, parents or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

Our Child Protection Officers may be contacted via the Main School Reception in person or by calling 9811 0200. Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis' and all Personal Information will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Privacy Policy.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed in June 2018

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy

This policy applies to all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, School Council members, Direct and Indirect Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers (together, known as 'staff' for the purposes of this policy only).

Korowa staff hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to students at the School. As such, it is their duty, at all times, to maintain professional boundaries with students.

The following policy and guidelines are designed to raise awareness of situations where professional boundary violations may occur and some strategies to minimise the risk of boundary violations.

The practicing of protective behaviours at all times will also reduce the possibility of vexatious claims being brought against staff.

Korowa's Policy

Korowa is committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment where all of our students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner where the risk of child abuse is minimised and a safe and supportive child safe environment is maintained.

It is our policy that:

- staff exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with students at all times
- staff identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student
- staff interaction with students is professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours
- conflict of interest issues must be reported to the Principal as soon as practicable
- equal learning opportunities are given to each student without discrimination
- appropriate consequences will be applied to staff who breach professional boundaries

What are Professional Boundaries?

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person (a student) entrusts their welfare and safety to another person (a staff member), in circumstances where a power imbalance exists.

The fact that School staff are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students means that there is always an inherent power imbalance that exists between them. It also means that professional boundaries must be established, maintained and respected at all times.

In most cases this power imbalance is clear; however, sometimes it may be more difficult to recognise especially for younger staff members who may only be a few years older than their students.

The following guidelines are not exhaustive and it is expected that all staff (no matter their age or experience) use their own good judgment, think very carefully of the implications and potential consequences of engaging in certain behaviours with students, and always err on the side of caution.

When unsure about whether professional boundaries are being, or have been, breached, ask yourself:

- Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?
- How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting?
- Am I sharing information for the student's benefit, or for my benefit?
- Am I dealing with this student differently from others in similar circumstances?
- Is my language or demeanour different from normal when dealing with this particular student?

Intimate Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be misinterpreted as having a romantic or sexual, rather than professional basis. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents/guardians.

Such relationships have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of students and colleagues, and may carry a serious reputational risk for the staff member and, in turn, the School.

The professional relationship of staff and students may be breached by:

- flirtatious behaviour or dating
- development of an intimate personal relationship
- sexual relations
- the use of sexual innuendo, inappropriate language and/or material with students
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- unwarranted and inappropriate filming or photography
- deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others (e.g. pornography)
- having intimate contact without a valid context via written or electronic means (e.g. email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms)
- going out, whether alone or in company, to social events such as the movies or dinner
- exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship

Staff should also be aware that developing or encouraging romantic or sexual relationships with recent former students (over 18 years of age) may violate professional boundaries and are strongly discouraged from doing so.

The imbalance of power and authority that exists in the staff/student relationship does not suddenly disappear after the student finishes their schooling. Staff should not assume that they will be protected from disciplinary action by claiming that a relationship began only after the student left the School as there may be a reasonable belief that the emotional intimacy of the relationship developed while the staff/student relationship existed.

Personal Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be perceived or misinterpreted as having a personal rather than professional element. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents or guardians. It is the student's perception of staff behaviour and not the intention of the staff member that is important.

An established and expected professional relationship between staff and students may be compromised by staff:

- attending parties or socialising with students outside of organised School events (without parental/guardian permission)
- sharing personal details about their private lives with students

- meeting with students outside of school hours without permission from the School

Staff must recognise at all times that their role is not to be a 'friend' or 'parent' to a student.

Fair Learning Opportunities

The main focus of teaching is effective student learning and as such, teachers are expected to support their students with their professional expertise so as to offer them the best education in their individual circumstances. The quality of teaching and learning between teachers and students characterises their relationship.

Teachers should demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect
- recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents by catering to their individual abilities and respecting their individual differences
- encouraging students to develop and reflect on their own values
- interacting with students without bias
- not engaging in preferential treatment
- not discriminating against any student on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, disability or religious or political conviction
- always making decisions in the students' best interests

Electronic Communications between Staff and Students

It is expected that all staff at the School will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all use of technology should be for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular activities
- all email communication between staff and students should be via the School email system and reflect a professional staff/student relationship
- staff should not communicate with students via text message where it is not in a professional context and does not originate from a Korowa owned number i.e. Staff are not to communicate with students using their personal mobile phones
- staff should not give out their personal telephone numbers or social media contact details
- staff are not to accept or request students as 'friends' on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate in any way that is not condoned or approved by the School
- staff should not exchange personal pictures with a student
- any student personal contact numbers or other personal contact details made available to the School should only be used for School communications

Physical Contact with Students

All staff should be aware that situations may arise that can be perceived in a manner that was not intended. For this reason, all staff at the School should adhere to the following guidelines for contact with students both in and outside of School grounds:

- staff should avoid unnecessary physical contact with students (This should be reflective of the Student's developmental needs (e.g. if the situation warrants it staff are not precluded from hugging a three-year-old child in distress)
- minimal, non-lingering, non-gratuitous physical contact in the context of the situation is acceptable (e.g. congratulatory pat on the back or handshake)
- contact for sport, drama and dance instruction is acceptable in a class situation but not in a 1:1 situation. If physical contact is required for specific technical instructions, it must be brief and only with the consent of the student. Note that a student may withdraw consent for this contact either verbally or gesturally and staff must remain vigilant whilst engaging in necessary contact situations. Once consent has been withdrawn no further contact can be or should be made

Off-Campus Excursions and Camps

During off-campus excursions or camps, the same physical contact guidelines apply as well as the following:

- checking of sleeping arrangements, or supervising of students changing should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students' privacy and personal space
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory
- ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict staff/student relationship is upheld and that inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student's bed, is not undertaken

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Where personal relationships with students such as family relationships and close friendship networks exist, questions of conflicts of interest may arise.

This may be more prevalent in close communities where professional boundaries may be tested due to the nature and size of the community. In these circumstances, staff need to be far more diligent in developing and maintaining these boundaries.

Where a staff member feels that a conflict of interest may exist, they should notify the Principal, or the Chair of the School Council if the conflict involves the Principal, and arrangements should be implemented to avoid the conflict situation if possible. For example, teaching of students by a staff member with a conflict should be avoided.

Any significant decisions relating to these students in the School (such as the appointment of classes or selection in sports teams) should be referred to another staff member and endorsed by a supervisor.

Disclosure of Staff/Student Interactions

It is Korowa's policy that all staff are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours. These interactions may include instances where the staff member is:

- related to the student
- friends with the student's parents or family
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours and has notified the School

Korowa maintains records of all declarations made by staff members related to their interactions with students, or relationships with students, that exist outside of school hours or School premises. These records are kept indefinitely.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are to:

- follow the guidelines as set out in this policy
- immediately report any conflicts of interest
- remove themselves from decision making where a conflict has been identified

Where a staff member breaches this policy Korowa may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal or termination of any contractual relationships with Third Party Contractors.

Implementation

These guidelines are implemented through a combination of:

- staff training and development in professional conduct
- student and parent/guardian education and information
- effective management of teachers engaging in inappropriate relationships with students
- effective management of conflicts of interest
- effective communication and incident notification procedures
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary

Korowa's Child Protection Officers

Process for Making a Report

Korowa has appointed the people listed below as the School's Child Protection Officers. Each Child Protection Officer is available to answer any questions that you may have with respect to our Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program.

The School's Child Protection Officers are your first point of contact for reporting child protection issues within the School. They receive special training that allows them to deal with child protection concerns both sensitively and effectively.

If you have any concern that a child may be experiencing any form of abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should immediately raise your concerns with one of our Child Protection Officers.

The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Korowa's Child Protection Officers:

Name

Kellie Lyneham

Deputy Principal

9811 0213

Fiona Raike

School Chaplain

9811 0238

Elizabeth Spurling

School Counsellor

9811 0254

Leanne McGregor

ELC Co-ordinator

9811 0268

Role Description

The Korowa Child Protection Officers:

- Act as one of the people that staff, parents/guardians and children contact to discuss a suspected abuse or child safety concern
- Accurately record all relevant information and actions taken
- Store all records and information in line with the School's Privacy Policy
- Assess how and when to report to the School Executive and authorities
- Act as "Child Protection Champions" and ensure a strong and sustainable child protection culture is embedded within the School
- Provide staff with a point of contact for discussion if they develop a belief that a mandatory report is required to be made
- In conjunction with the Korowa Wellbeing Team, instigate strategies to make people (adults and children) feel safe and comfortable in reporting suspected abuse
- In conjunction with the Korowa Marketing Team, publicise and make accessible for families and children, avenues for reporting incidents or concerns (i.e.: welcome pack, website)
- Ensure that the procedures for responding to alleged abuse are fair and focus on child safety (recommend to the Principal the suspension of the alleged perpetrator and/or the provision of alternative duties pending investigation)
- Ensure that there are clear procedures to allow people to report child protection concerns within the School
- Ensure that there are clear procedures to allow people to report reportable conduct matters within the School

- Ensure that all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers undertake child protection training so that they are able to identify signs of abuse, understand how to respond and when to make a referral either internally or to an external agency
- Are given direct access to the Chair of Council in the event that an allegation of abuse has been made against the Principal
- Provide support and comfort to a child reporting abuse or safety concerns, and never blame or interrogate a child
- Contact parents/guardians as appropriate
- Ensure processes for responding to suspected child abuse explicitly include culturally appropriate responses where suspected abuse involves an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child
- Use effective and school sanctioned communication channels when making the required contact
- Provide ongoing expertise to make referrals in support of alleged victims, their families and affected staff, such as helping them understand their rights and the process that will be followed in responding to allegations, and assistance in accessing counselling or other support as required
- Provide contact details for internal and/or external expertise so that staff have access to advice when managing child safety incidents, including expertise relating to culturally and/or linguistically diverse children, and children with a disability
- In conjunction with the School Executive, undertake timely reviews of child safe policies and procedures to be followed if child abuse occurs
- Support the Principal in developing suitable statements or responses to staff, parents and students in the event of an incident of confirmed child abuse
- Develop, in conjunction with the Principal, relevant media statements or responses in the event of an incident of confirmed child abuse that is made known to the wider public
- In conjunction with the School Executive, review organisation responses following an incident to help drive continuous improvement
- In conjunction with the HR Manager, ensure supervision requirements for staff and volunteers who work with children are enforced, maintained and regularly reviewed
- In conjunction with the Korowa Wellbeing Team, gather feedback from children e.g. surveys, focus groups and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implements improvements based on this feedback
- In conjunction with the School Executive, include priorities and actions in operational plans that nurture and affirm the involvement of all children in the organisation's activities, and in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability
- Provide culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

Child abuse can take many forms. The abuser may be a parent, guardian, staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. Unfortunately, the nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Even our legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse can vary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all allegations or disclosures of abuse, neglect, inappropriate behaviour or concerns about child safety by reporting all matters to the Victorian Child Protection Service or the Police, depending on the allegation or disclosure made.

Korowa has established simple and accessible procedures for anyone to report a child abuse concern internally to one of the School's Child Protection Officers. These Korowa Child Protection Reporting Procedures can be found on page 83.

Korowa has developed and implemented procedures for School Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers for responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse, or suspected child abuse, including procedures for support following a disclosure by a student.

Reporting procedures for Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, parents/guardians and other community members are also included in our Child Protection Reporting Procedures, which are available on our public website.

Age appropriate reporting procedures for students are developed through our Student Wellbeing Program.

This section describes our work systems, practices, policies and procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse both internally and externally. These include:

- Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Protection Incident
- Responding to an Emergency
- Reporting a Child Abuse Concern Internally
- General Legal Obligation to 'Act to Protect' and to Report Child Sexual Abuse
- Mandatory Reporting
- Reportable Conduct of staff, volunteers and others
- Responding to other concerns about the wellbeing of a child
- Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT)
- Communication with Parents and Guardians
- Support for students interviewed at School
- Child Protection Complaints Management Record Keeping
- Confidentiality and Privacy

All of the School's procedures for reporting and responding to allegations of child abuse are designed and implemented taking into account the diverse characteristics of the School community.

A summary of these procedures are made publicly available on the School's website through our Child Protection and Safety Policy and are accessible to all children, school staff and the wider community.

The School will respond to all allegations of child abuse in an appropriate manner including:

- informing the appropriate authorities and fully co-operating with any resulting investigation
- protecting any child connected to the allegation until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to an allegation that concerns a culturally diverse child or a child with a disability
- securing and retaining records of the allegation and the School's response to it

Documenting Your Observations and Actions

It is critical that all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Council members, Volunteers (direct and indirect), Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse. This information may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. Your notes may also assist you later if you're required to provide evidence to support your decisions regarding the handling of child protection incidents.

For more information about how to record observations, disclosures or allegations refer to the Child Protection Record Keeping section of this Program Handbook on page 66.

Preserving Evidence

When an incident of suspected child abuse occurs at the School, consider all of the following:

- environment: do not clean up the area and preserve the sites where the alleged incident occurred
- clothing: take steps to ensure that the person who has allegedly committed the abuse and the child who has allegedly been abused remain in their clothing. If this is not possible, ensure the clothes are not washed, handled as little as possible and stored in a sealed bag
- other physical items: ensure that items such as weapons, bedding and condoms are untouched
- potential witnesses: reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent discussion of the incident between those involved in the alleged incident

Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Protection Incident

Responding to an Emergency

All teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Council members, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers must act as soon as they witness a child protection incident or form a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of being abused.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid (if qualified to do so)
- calling 000 for urgent medical assistance or Police assistance to address immediate health and safety concerns
- briefing a Child Protection Officer to be the future liaison with the Police on the matter.

The following sections outline the six ways that you may become aware that a child may be experiencing abuse and strategies for managing each situation, and supporting and assisting children involved in the disclosure or report.

Witnessing a Child Protection Incident

If you witness an incident where you believe a child has been subject to abuse you must take immediate action to protect the safety of the child or children involved.

Where there is an immediate risk to the health and/or safety of a child, follow the steps outlined in the Responding to an Emergency section above.

If the child is in immediate danger call the police immediately on 000.

The School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse should be followed after the health and safety of the child involved is ensured.

Observation of Risk Indicators

The different types of child abuse and their key risk indicators are set out in detail in the earlier section of this program Child Abuse – Definition and Key Risk Indicators, as set out on page 9.

The process of identifying child abuse purely through observation of risk indicators can be complex and may occur over time. The complexity is magnified by the fact that many of the key risk indicators described may also occur as a result of other factors, not related to child abuse.

If you form a concern that a child may be being abused, you should make written notes of your observations recording both dates and times. You should also report the matter internally to a School Child Protection Officer.

Private Disclosure by a Child

If a student discloses a situation of abuse or neglect to you privately, you should stay calm and not display expressions of panic or shock.

You should reassure and support the child. You can do this by:

- stating clearly that the abuse is not the child's fault
- reassuring the child that you believe them
- telling the child that disclosing the matter is the right thing to do

You should be patient, and allow the child to talk at their own pace. When responding you should use the child's language and vocabulary.

Sometimes a student may try to elicit a promise from you that you will not tell anyone about the allegation. You must not make this promise, as you are responsible for reporting the matter.

Finally remember that your role is not to investigate the allegation. You should not interrogate the child and pressure them to tell you more than they want to.

Once a disclosure is made you must report the matter internally to a School Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. You should also make written notes of the circumstances of the disclosure recording both dates and times.

Following a disclosure of abuse or neglect by a student, staff should follow the steps set out in the School's Support Following Disclosure process, as set out on page 46.

Public Disclosure by a Child

Public disclosure occurs where you observe a child disclosing abuse to another child, or group of children.

In this circumstance, you should use a strategy of 'protective interrupting'.

The aim of 'protective interrupting' is to prevent a child from disclosing details of abuse in front of other children, whilst at the same time providing the child with the opportunity to disclose later, in a safe and confidential manner.

You can do this by:

- asking the child if you can talk privately
- moving the child away from the other students to a quiet space
- following the guidelines with respect to managing a private disclosure

Following a disclosure of abuse or neglect by a student, staff should follow the steps set out in the School's Support Following Disclosure process.

Third Party Disclosure

A third party such as a friend of the child, a relative or another parent may provide you with information relating to child abuse.

In this situation you should:

- listen to the person's concerns seeking clarification where required
- thank the person for raising their concern
- advise the person that we have procedures for dealing with situations like this
- advise the person that you will discuss their concerns with the relevant authorities

As with Private Disclosure you should reassure and support the person providing the information.

Sometimes a person may try to elicit a promise from you that you will not tell anyone about the allegation. You must not make this promise, as you are responsible for reporting the matter.

Finally remember that your role is not to investigate the allegation. You should not interrogate the third party and pressure them to tell you more than they want to.

Once a third party disclosure is made you must report the matter internally to a School Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. You should also make written notes of the circumstances of the disclosure recording both dates and times.

Disclosure by a Former Student

A former student of the School may come forward to a current staff member, or volunteer, and disclose past abuse from their time at the School. If you receive a disclosure from a former student about historical abuse, you must act.

If the former student is still of schooling age in Victoria and currently attending a Victorian school, you must follow the Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse in this Program Handbook, specifically the obligations you may have under the following policies:

- the Obligation to Act to Protect
- the Obligation to Report Child Sexual Abuse
- Mandatory Reporting
- Conduct That is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching

If the former student is no longer of schooling age or attending a school in Victoria, you must still act. For example, if the disclosure includes an allegation against a current staff member or teacher at the School this may trigger obligations under the Obligation to Act to Protect policy to remove the risk of abuse to other students.

Support Following Disclosure

You should take the following steps to support and assist a child after a disclosure of child abuse or neglect is made.

The range of measures employed will depend on:

- the degree of severity of the situation
- the risk of harm to the child
- the capability and willingness of the parent to protect the child from harm

After a disclosure is made:

- do not promise the child that you will not tell anyone about the allegation
- reassure the child that it was the right thing to do to tell an adult
- tell the child what you plan to do next
- do not confront the person believed to be the perpetrator
- report the matter to one of the School's Child Protection Officers who will be able to assist you in developing additional support strategies

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Support for Staff and Volunteers

Witnessing a child protection incident or receiving a disclosure or allegation of abuse can be a stressful experience for staff and Volunteers involved. The School provides support to impacted staff and Volunteers to access necessary support through our Child Protection Officers.

Reporting a Child Abuse Concern Internally

Child abuse situations can be very complex, not only from the perspective of ascertaining whether abuse has occurred but also in understanding what steps to take to protect a child.

It is important to remember at all times that the safety and welfare of the child are paramount.

Therefore, if you have a concern that a child may be experiencing abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should immediately raise your concerns with one of the School's Child Protection Officers. The School's Child Protection Officers will be able to assist you in clarifying your concerns and managing the next steps.

Contact details for our Child Protection Officers are set out on page 40.

Please note that reporting the matter internally does not release you from other legal and regulatory reporting obligations you may have, namely:

- The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence
- The Obligation to Act to Protect
- The Obligation to Make a Mandatory Report
- The Obligation to Notify Reportable Conduct

In addition, these reporting obligations apply even if the Principal, a Council member or a Child Protection Officer advises you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse.

General Legal Obligation to 'Act to Protect' and to Report Child Abuse

In Victoria there are specific criminal offences which impose general obligations on persons:

- aged 18 years or over to report any belief that a sexual offence has been committed, against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person over the age of 18 years (Crimes Act (Vic) s327)
- in authority within a school to act to remove or reduce a substantial risk that a sexual offence will be committed against a child (Crimes Act (Vic) s49C)

The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence

Source of Obligation

Under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (s 327), anyone aged 18 years or over must make a report to the Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person aged 18 years or over. Failure to make a report without reasonable excuse is an offence and carries a prison term.

If a report is made to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in accordance with mandatory reporting requirements, an additional report to the Police will not usually be required unless further information is obtained.

This obligation applies to anyone aged 18 years or over, including all non-teaching staff, direct contact and Indirect Contact Volunteers, and students aged 18 and over. The legislation also applies to teaching staff if not already covered by the mandatory reporting obligation.

What Must Be Reported?

Any person aged 18 or over who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult (a person aged 18 years or over) against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to the Police.

What is a Sexual Offence?

The Crimes Act sets out what constitutes a 'sexual offence'. This includes:

- rape
- indecent assault
- incest
- sexual penetration
- grooming a child for sexual conduct

A 'sexual offence' includes an attempted sexual offence.

What is a Reasonable Belief?

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

A 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows the child states that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused

Exceptions - Failure to Disclose

If you fail to disclose a sexual offence against a child to the Police, you will not be held liable where your reason for not reporting is that:

- you fear on reasonable grounds for the safety of any person (other than the offender), and a failure to report is reasonable
- the victim told you about the sexual offence (directly or indirectly), the victim was over 16 years old when he or she told you about the sexual offence, and the victim requested that the information not be disclosed (unless the victim has an intellectual disability and does not have the capacity to make an informed decision about this)
- you believe on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to the Police by another person (such as to the DHHS as part of mandatory reporting) and you have no further information

Unacceptable reasons for not reporting include if you are concerned with the interests (including the reputation, legal liability or financial status) of:

- the person involved in the sexual offence
- any organisation (such as the School)

A report made under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) mandatory reporting obligations may constitute a 'reasonable excuse' if you believe that you have no further information to provide to the Police.

International Students

The School must notify the VRQA if the alleged sexual offence relates to an international student and the School has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter in relation to that student thereby assuming responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare.

The Obligation to Act to Protect

Source of Obligation

Where a person in a position of authority at the School becomes aware that a staff member, direct contact or indirect contact volunteer, contractor, or other person associated with the School poses a substantial risk of committing a sexual offence against a student or students, the person has a duty to take immediate action to ensure that the student or students are protected from that risk.

The School has a duty of care which entails protecting all students from foreseeable risks while at school or engaging in School activities.

In addition, under section 49C of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (Crimes Act) a person who:

- a. by reason of the position they occupy at the School, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child (under the age of 16) will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of or over the age of 18 years who is associated with the School, and
- b. knows that there is a substantial risk that the person will commit a sexual offence against a relevant child

must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk.

Who is Responsible for Acting to Protect the Student/s?

The person responsible for taking steps to remove or reduce the risk to the student will depend upon the source of the risk. In a normal school context, usually a member of the school leadership team would have the necessary degree of supervision, power and authority to remove or reduce the risk. On tours, excursions, or camps a teacher or a volunteer coach could have the requisite power and responsibility.

Examples of people in a position of authority include:

- School Council members
- the Principal
- members of the School Executive
- Staff
- volunteers where they are in a position of supervision

When Should Action Be Taken?

A person in a position of authority at Korowa is required to act if they know that there is a substantial risk that a student or students may become the victim of a sexual offence, and the risk is caused by a person associated with the School.

Knowledge is more than holding a tentative belief or mere suspicion.

If a person in authority has a suspicion or belief that students are at risk of harm they must take steps to follow up on that suspicion or belief by investigating further and should raise the issue with a School Child Protection officer.

The duty to act extends to situations where the students at risk or the person in authority is outside of Victoria.

What is a Substantial Risk?

A risk will be a substantial risk if a reasonable person would have judged the risk of a sexual offence being committed against the student as being substantial.

It is not necessary to prove that a sexual offence was committed in order for the substantial risk to exist i.e. a person in a position of authority should not wait for a student to be harmed before acting.

A number of factors will contribute to determining if a risk is a substantial risk, including:

- the likelihood or probability that a child will become the victim of a sexual offence
- the nature of the relationship between a child and the adult who may pose a risk to the child
- the background of the adult who may pose a risk to the child, including any past or alleged misconduct
- any vulnerabilities particular to a child which may increase the likelihood that they may become the victim of a sexual offence
- any other relevant fact which may indicate a substantial risk of a sexual offence being committed against a child

What is a Sexual Offence?

Action must be taken where there is a substantial risk of sexual offences occurring, including:

- rape
- indecent assault
- incest
- sexual penetration
- grooming a child for sexual conduct
- an attempted sexual offence or an assault with intent to commit a sexual offence

Who is 'a Person Associated with the School'?

A person associated with the School is an adult and can be a:

- School Council member
- Principal
- teacher
- employee
- volunteer (including parents)
- contractor

A person will not be considered to be associated with the School purely because they receive services from the School.

Procedure to Reduce or Remove a Substantial Risk

Where any staff member, volunteer, or other person in a position of authority at the time, becomes aware of a risk of a sexual offence against a student or students under their care, they should immediately:

- take reasonable steps which would remove or reduce the risk to the student or students, which may include immediately removing the person from contact with the student or students
- report the matter to a School Child Protection Officer, and the Principal, as soon as practicable

Appropriate action to be taken may include, for example:

- a current employee who is known to pose a risk to a student or students should be immediately removed from contact with students and reported to authorities and investigated
- a parent who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children in a school should not be allowed to attend overnight school camps as a parent helper

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger call the Police on 000.

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Source of Obligation

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYFA) requires that mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection when they believe that a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection from significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse.

If a report is made by mandatory reporters in accordance with CYFA mandatory reporting obligations, an additional report to the Police under s 327 Crimes Act may not be required unless you have further information.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Child Abuse Key Risk Indicators, as set out on page 9, and The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence, as set out on page 47.

Who Must Make a Mandatory Report?

Mandatory reporters are defined by the CYFA and include:

- teachers
- the Principal
- medical practitioners
- nurses

It is the responsibility of other staff, volunteers or members of the school community to check whether they are Mandatory Reporters under child protection legislation.

Reporting by Non-Mandated Staff

If you are not a Mandatory Reporter, you still have the option of making a report to DHHS under the CYFA if you believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The CYFA states that any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of harm should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection.

All School staff who have concerns that a student may be in need of protection or may have been the victim of a sexual offence, should notify a School Child Protection Officer as soon as possible to discuss their concerns. Also refer to The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence.

A Mandatory Reporter must make a report even if the School's Child Protection Officers does not share their belief that a report must be made. The Principal must be informed of your intention to make such a report.

What gives rise to a Mandatory Report?

A mandatory report must be made when you form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, where the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of:

- physical injury
- sexual abuse

and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

Reasonable Grounds

The concept of 'reasonable grounds' requires you to consider whether another person, when faced with similar information, would also draw the same conclusion. It does not mean reporters are required to be certain, but rather reporters should ensure their concerns are well founded and based on information from a reliable source. There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- a child states they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused
- someone who knows the child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused
- a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused
- the staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on a child's safety, stability or development
- the staff member observes signs of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child

Grounds for belief include matters of which a person has become aware and any opinions based on those matters.

'Significant' means that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent.

What is 'significant' is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's safety, welfare or wellbeing.

Significant harm can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these.

Physical Injury or Sexual Abuse

To assist in identifying physical injury or sexual abuse, refer to the School's information relating to Child Abuse - Definitions and Key Risk Indicators.

Parents Have Not Protected, or Are Unlikely to Protect, the Child From Harm of That Type

The meaning of this phrase is not defined by legislation, but some examples may assist.

A parent who 'has not protected, or is unlikely to protect that child from harm of that type' includes a parent who wants to protect his or her child from harm, but lacks the means to.

It also includes a parent who has the means to protect his or her child from harm, but does not want to.

A parent may be rendered 'unlikely to protect' that child for many reasons. For example:

- that parent does not, or refuses to recognise that harm is occurring
- that parent or child may be subject to domestic violence
- that parent's partner may be abusive or harmful to the child

Parent includes:

- the child's father
- the child's mother
- the spouse of the mother or father of the child
- the domestic partner of the father or mother of the child
- a person who has custody of the child
- a person who is named as the father on the child's birth certificate
- a person who acknowledges that he is the father of the child by an instrument under the Status of Children Act 1974 (Vic)
- a person in respect of whom a court has made a declaration or a finding or order that the person is the father of the child.

What to Report and When

A report becomes mandatory as soon as is practicable after forming the belief.

A report must include details of the belief, and the reasonable grounds of that belief.

Additional reports must be made on each occasion where you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

Refer to the Victorian Department of Education's Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST (Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Team) for guidance on making a decision on whether to report.

How is a Report/Referral Made?

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

A report to DHHS Child Protection should be considered if the staff member forms the view the child is in need of protection because:

- the harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development
- the harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability and development
- the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child from harm

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit, call the 24-hour Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78.

Concerns that require immediate attention should be made to the local or regional Human Services Child Protection office, or the After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services on 131 278.

What If I Don't Have a Reasonable Belief?

If you don't have a reasonable belief about a child, but still have concerns, you can refer the matter to a Korowa Child Protection Officer.

There is also the option to refer the matter to Child FIRST.

A referral to Child FIRST should be considered if a staff member forms the view that the concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the child and the immediate safety of the child is not compromised.

A referral can be made when the following factors may affect a child:

- significant parenting problems
- family conflict
- a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability or bereavement
- isolated or unsupported families
- significant social or economic disadvantage

To contact Child FIRST, refer to their website.

What Happens After a Report/Referral is Made?

After receiving a report, DHHS Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required. In most cases, DHHS Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report.

After receiving a referral, Child FIRST may consult an experienced community-based Child Protection practitioner in their assessment. The assessment may lead to the involvement of a local family services organisation.

In most cases, Child FIRST will inform the referrer of the outcome of the referral.

Child FIRST must report the matter to DHHS Child Protection if they form the view the child is in need of protection

Reports made to the Police will be dealt with in accordance with Police practice.

Notifying Reportable Conduct Policy

Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others

Source of Obligation

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (the Act) requires the School to investigate and report to the Commission for Children and Young People (Commission) allegations of 'employee' reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

The School has developed the following Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others Policy which sets out our systems for enabling persons to report reportable conduct and for such reports to be investigated and responded to. This policy is made available to all staff, Volunteers, Contractors, members of the Council, families and students via our public website and staff intranet.

The Commission's website provides additional guidance and materials which assist the School to understand and meet their obligations under the Act.

Who is an Employee

For the purposes of the Act, 'employee' is defined as a person aged 18 years or over who is:

- employed by the School whether or not that person is employed in connection with any work or activities of the School that relate to children
- engaged by the School to provide services, including as a volunteer, contractor, office holder or officer, whether or not the person provides services to children

A minister or religion or a religious leader is also an employee.

Of relevance to the School, the following people are considered to be employees:

- School Council Members
- The Principal
- Staff members
- Volunteers
- Third Party Contractors
- External Education Providers

For the purposes of this policy, all of the above are referred to collectively as "staff" or "staff members".

What is Reportable Conduct

Reportable conduct is defined in the Act to include:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child

"Sexual misconduct" includes:

- behaviour, physical contact or speech or other communication of a sexual nature, for example 'sexting'
- inappropriate touching or physical contact
- grooming behaviour
- voyeurism

"Sexual offence" means a serious sexual offence as set out in clause 1 of Schedule 1 of the Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic), which includes rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, incest, various sexual offences against or involving a child, persistent sexual abuse of a child, grooming, and the production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.

"Significant" means in relation to emotional or psychological harm or neglect, that the harm is more than trivial or significant, but need not be as high as serious and need not have a lasting permanent effect.

Refer to Child Abuse - Definitions and Key Risk Indicators for more information about sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, emotional or psychological harm and neglect.

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines expected standards of behaviour of staff members at the School when interacting with children and young people. The commission of conduct which breaches the Child Safety Code of Conduct will constitute reportable conduct under this policy.

Our Staff and Students Professional Boundaries Policy explains the importance of staff members maintaining professional boundaries with students. If a professional boundary is crossed, the conduct involved will constitute reportable conduct under this policy.

What Must Be Notified

Under the Act, the School must notify the Commission of a reportable allegation against a staff member.

Reportable allegation is defined in the Act to mean any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee of the School has committed:

- reportable conduct
- misconduct that may involve reportable conduct – whether or not the conduct/misconduct is alleged to have occurred in the course of the person's employment at the School.

Who Must Notify

Under the Act, any person may disclose a reportable allegation to the Commission (section 16L). A disclosure can be made using an online form available from the Commission's website, by phone or by letter.

At the School, the Principal is primarily responsible for the School's compliance with the reportable conduct obligations under the Act and must notify the Commission if she becomes aware of a reportable allocation against an employee of the School.

Reportable Conduct and Other Reporting Obligations

The Reportable Conduct obligation covered in this policy is separate and distinct from the:

- Mandatory Reporting obligation under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

The threshold for reporting allegations of reportable conduct is much lower than these other reporting obligations.

Any allegations of criminal conduct, including physical violence, significant emotional or psychological abuse, sexual offences and significant neglect must be reported to the Victorian Police as the first priority.

Internal Reporting of Reportable Allegations

As soon as a person, including a staff member, forms a reasonable belief that a staff member at the School has engaged in reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct (the reportable allegation), the person must notify a Child Protection Officer who must then notify the Principal. The report may be made verbally or in written form using the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template available on page 99.

While this Template was created for reporting abuse, rather than reportable conduct, it is an excellent way to record as much information about the incident/s as is available.

Where the reportable allegation involves the Principal, the staff member must notify a Child Protection Officer who must then notify the Chair of the School Council.

It is important to note that the Child Protection Officer does not have a formal role under the Act (unless the Principal is a designated Child Protection Officer). However, it is the School's policy that the Child Protection Officer is notified first.

Where a verbal report is made by a staff member, it should be followed up with a written report provided to the Principal within 48 hours of the verbal report.

Where a staff member has a reasonable belief that the Principal has engaged in reportable conduct, verbal and written reports should be given by the Child Protection Officer to the Chair of the School Council.

Reporting to the Commission: The Principal or Chair of the Council

Where the Principal receives a reportable allegation from any person, including a staff member or a Child Protection Officer Title they must notify the Commission.

Where the reportable allegation involves the Principal, the person must notify a Child Protection Officer who must then notify the Chair of the School Council who will become the 'head of the School' for the purposes of reporting the reportable allegation.

There are two stages of reporting.

The Commission must be notified in writing of:

- the reportable allegation as soon as possible, and in any event within three business days being notified (**Stage One Report**) and
- the proposed next course of action (see below), as soon as practicable, and within 30 days of becoming aware of the reportable allegation (**Stage Two Report**).

Stage One Report

The report to the Commission must state:

- that a reportable allegation has been made against a staff member
- the name (including any former name and alias, if known) and date of birth, if known, of the staff member
- whether the Victoria Police has been contacted about the reportable allegation
- the name, address and telephone number of the School
- the name of the Principal

An online form available on the Commission's website must be used for the Stage One Report.

If the staff member is a registered teacher and the misconduct involves a charge, conviction or finding of guilt of a sexual offence, the School must notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) immediately under Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The timing of making a Stage One Report to the Commission under this policy will coincide with the timing of a report made to the VIT.

Stage Two Report

The report to the Commission must state:

- detailed information about the reportable allegation
- whether or not the School proposes to take any disciplinary or other action in relation to the staff member and the reasons why it intends to take, or not to take, that action
- any written submissions made to the Principal concerning the reportable allegation that an employee wished to have considered in determining what, if any disciplinary or other action should be taken in relation to the staff member

Any allegation of child abuse, including physical violence, significant emotional or psychological abuse, sexual offences or significant neglect, must be reported to the Victorian Police.

What Happens After a Report to the Commission is made?

After the Principal or the Chair of the Council has made a report to the Commission, they must ensure that an appropriate investigation of the reportable allegation is conducted.

The investigation can be conducted by the Principal or the Chair of the Council (if the allegation involves the Principal) or the School can appoint an independent investigator.

The Principal must notify the Commission of who will be conducting the investigation.

The investigation must be conducted in accordance with the rules of natural justice. For example, the investigation should be conducted without bias and the person against whom the allegation is made should be given the right to respond.

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the Principal or Chair must give the Commission:

- a copy of the findings of the investigation and the reasons for those findings
- details of any disciplinary or other action that the Principal (or Chair) proposes to take in relation to the staff member and the reasons for that action
- if the Principal (or Chair) does not propose to take any disciplinary or other action in relation to the staff member, the reasons why no action is to be taken

Under the Act, a staff member may seek a review by the Commission of a finding made at the conclusion of an investigation.

Information Sharing: Children and Parents/Guardians

Under the Act, the Principal may disclose:

- information about the progress of the investigation;
- the findings, reasons for the findings and the recommendations made at the conclusion of the investigation;
- an action taken in response to those findings

to:

- the child who is the subject of the reporting allegation;
- a parent of the child
- a guardian of the child; or
- the DHHS if the child is under its care.

Information Sharing: Schools, the Commission and Others

Under the Act, the Principal may disclose information in relation to:

- a reportable allegation
- a concern that reportable conduct has been committed
- the investigation of a reportable allegation or concern about reportable conduct
- the findings of an investigation and the reasons or recommendations made at the conclusion of the investigation
- any action taken in response to those findings

to:

- the Commission
- VRQA
- the Chief Commissioner of Police
- if necessary for the purposes of an investigation, an independent investigator
- if necessary for the purposes of a Working with Children Check, the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation
- a relevant Minister

Publication of Information

The School must not publish information that would enable the identification of:

- a person or who notified the Commission
- a child in relation to whom a reportable allegation was made or a finding of reportable conduct was made

The Act provides more information on the meaning of 'publish', which includes making the information publicly available in writing or email.

Powers of the Commission

The Commission has broad powers under the Act in relation to investigating a reportable allegation at the School. The Commission may visit the School, inspect documents and interview staff members or children involved in the reportable allegation.

The School must assist the Commission in all reasonable aspects of its investigation.

Record Keeping

The School maintains records of these reportable allegations, written reports and reportable conduct investigation findings indefinitely.

Records relating to a child protection incident are only disposed of in accordance with our Records Management Policy.

This Policy will be reviewed in June 2018

Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Child

If you have any concern about the wellbeing of a child or young person, regardless of whether or not it has been caused by abuse or neglect, your concern should be taken seriously and acted upon.

The School and its teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Council members, Principal, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers (together, known as "staff" for the purposes of this policy only) owe a duty of care to all students at the School to ensure that they feel safe and are supported at School.

Concerns about the wellbeing of a child, that do not appear to be the result of abuse or neglect, may be reported to:

- Child FIRST
- the Victorian Police

DHHS Child Protection should also be contacted if you believe a child is in need of protection.

Child FIRST

Child FIRST is a community-based referral point to Family Services in Victoria. In addition to reporting suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities in accordance with the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse, all staff should make a referral to Child FIRST if:

- you have significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- your concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- you, or the School, have discussed the referral with the child's family and they are supportive of it

Examples of concerns that staff should refer to Child FIRST include instances where a child's care or development is significantly impacted by:

- parenting problems
- family conflict or breakdown
- pressure due to a family member's physical/mental illness
- significant social or economic disadvantage

Victoria Police

In addition to reporting suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities in accordance with the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse, all staff must contact Victoria Police on 000 if:

- a child's immediate safety is compromised
- a child is partaking in any risk taking activity that is illegal or extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the child

DHHS Child Protection

In addition to reporting suspected abuse to Child FIRST or the Police, the appropriate authorities in accordance with the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse, all staff should contact DHHS Child Protection if you believe a child is in need of protection.

Common grounds for protection include instances where:

- a child's parents have abandoned the child and after reasonable inquiries, the parents cannot be found and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child
- a child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person willing and able to care for the child
- a child is displaying extreme risk-taking behaviour, which has potentially severe or life-threatening consequences. For example: severe alcohol or drug use, unsafe sexual activity including prostitution, or violent or dangerous peer group activity. Staff should also report extreme risk-taking behaviour that is illegal to the Police
- there is a threat of harm to an unborn child, including circumstances where a parent has previously demonstrated an inability to safely parent

Record Keeping Obligations

For the School's record keeping obligations relating to child protection incidents or child wellbeing concerns, refer to Child Protection Record Keeping.

Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching

Reportable Conduct

The School has a duty of care to investigate and act on allegations of employee misconduct or conviction which relate to their ability to perform their functions.

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Victoria), the School must notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) once the School has taken action against a registered teacher. The VIT then has powers to investigate and take further action.

VIT Reporting, Mandatory Reporting & Reporting to the Commission

The reportable conduct obligation covered in this policy is separate and distinct from the Mandatory Reporting obligation under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (refer to Mandatory Reporting) and the Reportable Conduct obligation under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2017 (Vic) refer to (Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others).

Internal Reporting of Allegations of Staff Misconduct

Any allegation of staff misconduct must be immediately reported to the Principal, or the Chair of the School Council should the allegation involve the Principal.

Internal Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct

Once an allegation of misconduct has been made (which does not require reporting to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection under the Mandatory Reporting obligations) an internal investigation, led by the Principal, or the Chair of the School Council if the allegation relates to the Principal, will be conducted in such a manner as the particular circumstances demand.

It is important to note that an internal investigation must not be conducted in relation to an allegation that is the subject of Mandatory Reporting until clearance is given by the relevant authorities (Police or DHHS Child Protection).

Reporting Obligation to the VIT

The School must immediately notify the VIT if the School has taken action against a registered teacher in response to:

- allegations of serious misconduct
- serious incompetence
- fitness to teach (which relates to character, reputation and conduct, and whether the teacher is physically and mentally able to teach)
- a registered teacher's ability to practice as a teacher is seriously detrimentally affected or likely to be seriously affected because of an impairment

The School must also notify the VIT if the School becomes aware that a teacher:

- has been charged with or committed for trial for a sexual offence, (including grooming and child pornography offences)
- has been convicted or found guilty of an indictable offence (offences detailed in the Crimes Act and the Wrongs Act, including offences which carry prison sentences of 5 years or more or penalties over a threshold level)

What 'Action' Must Be Reported

'Actions' which will be reported by the School to the VIT include (but are not limited to):

- disciplinary action taken by the School
- where a teacher resigns after being advised by the School that it is inquiring into allegations

When to Notify the VIT

The VIT should be notified of the action taken against a teacher once the process initiated by the School has been started.

VIT Response

On receiving the notification, the VIT has the power to:

- ensure that it has obtained all relevant information from the School, and may request further information
- decide whether the matter does not reach the threshold required for it to proceed
- conduct an investigation, an informal hearing, or a formal hearing
- summarily suspend the teacher on an interim basis pending an investigation, if the VIT forms a reasonable belief that the teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children and believes that suspension is necessary to protect children

A formal hearing may result in findings which can result in cautions, reprimands, conditions imposed including counselling and further education, suspension, cancellation of registration and/or a period of disqualification.

Impact on Working With Children Check

Where an employee, volunteer, or contractor has been charged with or found guilty of a serious sexual, violent or drug-related offence (including grooming and child pornography offences) (Category 1 or Category 2 offence in the Working with Children Act 2005) their Working with Children card will be revoked and they will not be able to work, or volunteer to work with children.

International Students

The School must notify the VRQA if an alleged child protection incident, suspicion or disclosure relates to an international student and the School has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter in relation to that student thereby assuming responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

In many cases of suspected child abuse, or where it is suspected that a child is at risk of being abused, it is critical that the child's parents/guardians are notified as soon as is practicable after a notification has been made to the appropriate external authority. This enables the child's parents/guardian's to take steps to:

- prevent or limit their child's exposure to further abuse
- ensure that their child receives the support that is needed

Before contacting parents/guardians the School's Principal or a Child Protection Officer must seek advice from DHHS Child Protection or the Police, depending on who the report was made to. The Principal or a Child Protection Officer will be advised by an external authority not to contact the parents in circumstances where:

- the parents/guardians are alleged to have engaged in the abuse
- a disclosure to the parents/guardians may subject the child to further abuse
- the child is a mature minor (assessed to be sufficiently intelligent and mature to make such decisions on their own behalf) and has requested that the parents/guardian's not be contacted
- the notification is likely to have an adverse effect on an ongoing investigation into the incident

It is the School's policy that any notification made to parents/guardians of a child suspected to have been abused, or is at risk of being abused, is made by the Principal or a Child Protection Officer after a notification to either DHHS Child Protection or the Police has been made.

The Principal may disclose information about an investigation into a reportable allegation to a parent or guardian of the child in relation to which a reportable allegation has been made. Refer to Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others.

Support for Students Interviewed at the School

The School has certain legal requirements when a request is made by the Police or DHHS Child Protection workers to interview students regarding child protection incidents at the School. Students to be interviewed may include victims, witnesses or those alleged to have perpetrated abuse.

Support for Students

All students interview by the Police or DHHS Child Protection at the School must be supported. Where possible, the student's parents/carers should be present for any interview. Where this is not practicable, one of the following persons may provide support to the student during the interview, as appropriate:

- the Principal
- a Child Protection Officer
- in the case of Police interviews, an independent support person over the age of 18 who is not connected with the School, for example a social worker or nurse (independent supportive adult)

Consideration should be given as to whether there may be a conflict of interest between the independent supportive adult and the student being interviewed. For example, a situation may arise where the Principal or Child Protection Officer is related to the perpetrator of the child protection incident, the student is a family member, or the Principal or Child Protection Officer may be the perpetrator.

General Protocols

The School's Principal must:

- facilitate interviews requested by the Police or DHHS Child Protection workers
- advise students of their right to have an independent supportive adult, parent or carer present at such an interview
- arrange for the student to choose an independent supportive adult to be present
- balance their obligation to protect the rights of students with their obligation to assist the Police and DHHS Child Protection in their exercise of duty
- ensure there is someone acting as an independent supportive adult for students interviewed at school by the Police or DHHS Child Protection workers
- observe confidentiality at all times in the management of a mandatory reporting or criminal case

Contacting Parents/Guardians

Before contacting a student's parents/guardians, the Principal must seek advice from the Police or DHHS Child Protection to determine if parents/guardians should be present at the interview.

Where appropriate, parents/guardians must be advised of the scheduling of an interview with the Police. Parents/guardians should also be advised of interviews that have been scheduled with DHHS Child Protection where it is deemed to be appropriate; however, DHHS Child Protection may conduct interviews with students without parental/guardian knowledge or consent in exceptional circumstances.

Student as a Victim/Witness

When the Principal allows interviews involving students who may be victims or witnesses, they should:

- support and encourage the student to provide as much information as possible
- inform the student that a note of the circumstances and the content of the interview will be made and communicated to their parents/guardians as soon as possible, unless doing so causes a risk of abuse

Student as a Suspect

If Police need to speak with a student who has allegedly abused another child, or student at the School, this should preferably be done in the presence of the student's parents/guardian, or another independent supportive adult.

Complying with Court Orders

A subpoena or witness summons is a court order that compels the School to produce documents or attend court and give evidence, or both. The Principal or a staff member will usually be issued with a subpoena or witness summons because a party to legal proceedings believes that the School, the Principal or a staff member has information or documents that are relevant to the proceeding.

The School will seek external legal advice and support relating to complying with subpoenas or witness summons.

Making Additional Reports

There are some circumstances in which you will be required to make an additional report to an appropriate external authority.

Reporting Further Grounds for Belief or Suspicion

If you hold a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, you must still make a report to the relevant external authority about a child even if:

- DHHS Child Protection or the Police have previously been involved or are currently involved with the child and/or their family
- you are aware that another party, such as another staff member, Volunteer, or family member, has raised concerns with the relevant authorities

Every report is critical to protecting a child by building evidence and enabling external authorities to gain a clear understanding of the risks posed to the child.

Another Person Has Made a Report

There may be times when two or more staff members at the School (for example the Principal and a Child Protection Officer) has formed a belief about the same child on the same occasion and based on the same information.

In this situation, it is sufficient that only one of the staff members make a report to the relevant external authority, as the belief is based on the same information. However, the other staff member, who does not make the report, is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all grounds for their own belief were included in the report made to the authority.

If staff members do not agree on what should be reported, for example a staff member does not agree with the Principal's decision to make a report to an external authority, the staff member is legally obliged to make a report anyway. The staff member must notify the Principal of their intention to make such a report.

Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Child

If you believe that a child has not been subjected to abuse or neglect but still hold significant concerns about the child's wellbeing, you still may be required to report your concerns to DHHS Child Protection, the Police or Child FIRST. For more information about reporting wellbeing concerns refer to the Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Child section of this Program Handbook.

Child Protection Complaints Management

Any child protection-related feedback, comments or complaints from School community members and relevant stakeholders must be advised to the Principal. If the complaint is about the Principal, it should be brought to the attention of the Chair of the School Council. This information is captured, analysed and acted upon where appropriate.

This may include feedback about certain staff members or volunteers, or the School's Child Protection Program.

When a complaint is made to the School it is important for the School to consider whether the complaint raises any concerns about unreported abuse and/or risk of abuse at the School.

All School Council members, staff including the Principal, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers must follow the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse if any information received with a complaint leads to new grounds for a reasonable belief or suspicion that a student may be subject to, or at risk of, any unreported abuse.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Confidentiality of Information Relating to Child Protection Matters

Anyone who has access to information regarding a case of suspected child abuse must keep such information confidential and secure and must only disclose or discuss this information with those involved in managing the situation.

Inappropriate disclosure will be subject to disciplinary action.

You must not provide undertakings that are inconsistent with your reporting obligations in the School's Child Protection Program. In particular, you must not promise a student that you will not tell anyone about the student's disclosure.

Students and any other parties who become involved in the investigation (this may include other students) should be informed of the reporting process and be required to maintain confidentiality.

Protection of Reporter's Identity

Reports or referrals made to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST are confidential and the reporter's identity is generally protected by law. Exceptions include if:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child or family of the report
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a court or tribunal decides the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence

The identity of the person who makes a report to the Police, including reports under section 327 of the Crimes Act (Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence), will remain confidential unless:

- the person themselves discloses their identity or they consent in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for the person's identity to be disclosed

Reporter Liability

A person who makes a mandatory report in accordance with the Children, Youth and Families Act or a report under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (reportable conduct scheme) will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation.

If a report is made in good faith it does not constitute a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter and the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

Protection of Staff's WWC Status

The School will only be informed of whether an individual passes or fails the Check. None of the information gathered for the Check, such as criminal or professional records, will be passed on to Korowa.

Protection of Personal Information

How Korowa handles the information we collect about individuals (referred to in the Privacy Act as personal information) is very important, as the people we deal with expect us to handle their personal information properly and we have a legal obligation to do so. Personal information is information, or an opinion, about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- whether the information, or opinion, is true or not
- whether the information, or opinion, is recorded in a material form or not

The Privacy Act only applies to personal information that is captured in a record. All Personal Information will be handled in accordance with Korowa's Privacy Policy.

Requests for Information

If you receive a request from the Police, the Commission for Children and Young People or DHHS Child Protection for information relating to a student who has been impacted:

- obtain the request for information in writing
- ensure that the written request includes:
 - the name of the Police, representative of the Commission or DHHS Child Protection officer, the organisation they work for and their contact details
 - a description of the information and/or documents being sought
 - the reasons why the information and/or documents are being sought
 - what authority the officer or the organisation believes that they have to access the requested information and documents

When information and/or documents are requested in this way, you may be permitted to share the information. However, you are not compelled to do so.

Information Sharing with the School Community

The School takes great care to assess the relevance and appropriateness of sharing information about a child protection incident before providing any information about child abuse to the School community because even the confirmation of an incident or allegation can lead to the identification of a victim.

Child Protection Record Keeping

Effective child protection record keeping is one of the School's key strategies in the management of its child protection obligations, including the fulfilment of our duty of care.

It is through such record keeping that the School can ensure that, should there ever be a need for evidence of the School's child safe culture or precautions and preventative measures taken in response to the risk of child abuse, the School has well-documented and easily-accessible records.

Documenting a suspicion or belief of abuse

Where a staff member, School Council member or Direct Contact Volunteer forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a student is in need of protection, written and dated notes of their observations and concerns should be recorded to assist in a referral/report of child abuse.

All verbal and written communications regarding child protection matters (including notes of observations, student disclosures, meetings and telephone calls) must be properly documented. The documented records should include dates and times and enough detail to record key conversations, especially those relating to the student's disclosure.

The School Counsellor will create a file for each student where Child Protection issues are involved and all hard copy records must be stored securely in the School Counsellor's file for that particular student.

All electronic records relating to Child Protection matters will be recorded in Synergetic under the 'record of interaction' tab and this will only be accessible by the School Executive.

When a Student leaves Korowa the Student File, Student Counselling File, Student Careers File and the Student Academic Support File will be collated and stored securely for an indefinite period.

How to Record Observations, Disclosures or Allegations of Abuse

The School requires all members of the School community, including School Council members, staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers to use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template form to record all observations, beliefs, suspicions, disclosures or allegations of abuse. A copy of the template is available at page 99.

The Template is provided by the DET and DHHS Child Protection for all Victorian schools and is made available on the School's public website, internal intranet, and in hard copy at the School.

The 'Process of Review' section of the Template must be completed between 4-6 weeks after an incident, suspicion or disclosure of abuse in conjunction with the School's Principal, a Child Protection Officer or a member of the School Executive team.

All completed Template reporting forms are to be given to the School's Principal or a Child Protection Officer. If the allegations involve the Principal the template should be provided to the Chair of the School Council. The School maintains records of all child abuse observations, disclosures, allegations, incidents and subsequent investigations in electronic form indefinitely. Records relating to a child protection incident are only disposed of in accordance with our Records Management Policy.

Working with Children Check Documentation

It is the responsibility of the Director People and Culture to verify the status of all School staff and non-parent volunteers' Working with Children Checks (WWC Checks).

In line with the School's risk-based approach to child safety and protection, where parent volunteers are volunteering at off-site activities, such as excursions or camps, the School requires that these parent volunteers undergo a Working with Children Check clearance as a matter of best practice. These records are to be kept with all relevant excursion documentation and recorded in the School's Synergetic database.

Korowa maintains records (electronic (in the School's Synergetic database) or hard copy format) of child-related workers including:

- Full name
- WWC Check Application Receipt Number
- WWC Check Card Number
- Date and outcome of WWC Check clearance
- Notices sent by the Department of Justice
- Expiry date

Records must be readily available if required for audit and monitoring purposes.

Recording Child Protection Actions

Section 91 of the Wrongs Act imposes a duty of care on schools to take reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child under its care, supervision or authority, by an individual associated with the school. If the school is involved in a proceeding under the Wrongs Act, the school is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove, on the balance of probabilities, that it took reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse.

Whether or not a school took reasonable precautions will be assessed by a court in accordance with considerations set out in the Wrongs Act and case law. The effective implementation of the School's risk management strategies in Child Protection Risk Management is an example of taking reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child.

It is critical that the School maintains accurate and comprehensive records of these policies, procedures, work systems and strategies should the courts ever call on such evidence in relation to a claim against the School for damages in respect of child abuse.

For more information about the School's record keeping procedures refer to our Records Management Policy.

Creating and Maintaining a Child Safe Environment

Child Safety Human Resources Practices

Korowa only engages people who are suitable to work with students at the School and has developed and implemented child-safe human resources practices accordingly.

In addition to ensuring Working With Children Checks are completed in accordance with our legal obligations, Korowa is committed to ensuring that newly recruited and existing staff, Council members, Direct and Indirect Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of all relevant policies and procedures, and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.

This is done through various human resources work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to protect children from abuse and create a child safe culture. These include:

Child Safe Recruitment Practices

At Korowa we are committed to ensuring that our recruitment practices create a safe environment for our students. To this end we have established policies and procedures for recruiting employees, School Council members and Direct Contact Volunteers and for assessing their suitability to work with children.

Our recruitment processes are designed to select appropriate staff, School Council members and Direct Contact Volunteers and discourage inappropriate people from working within the School.

Each job description for staff involved in child-connected work (being those persons with direct contact with children that is regular and not incidental to the work) has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child protection for those in that role and the occupant's essential qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child protection.

All applicants for child-connected work (being those persons with direct contact with children that is regular and not incidental to the work) at the School are informed about these requirements and the School's child protection practices prior to commencing work at the School.

It is our policy that all new staff and members of the School Council undergo screening including:

- a Working with Children Check clearance status
- personal identity verification and background checking
- verification of professional or other qualifications relevant to the job
- an examination of their history of child-connected work
- reference checking that addresses the person's suitability for the job and working with children

Direct Contact Volunteers

With the exception of parents/guardians volunteering in an activity that their child is participating in, all of the School's Direct Contact Volunteers undergo the following screening prior to their engagement by the School:

- a Working with Children Check clearance status
- personal identity verification and background checking
- verification of professional and other qualifications if relevant to their role
- an examination of their history of child-connected work
- reference checking that addresses the person's suitability for the job and working with children

In line with the School's risk-based approach to child safety and protection, where parent volunteers are volunteering at off-site activities, such as excursions or camps, the School requires that these parent volunteers undergo a Working with Children Check clearance as a matter of best practice.

All School Council members, employees and Direct Contact Volunteers are also subject to rigorous interview procedures.

All new staff members and Direct Contact Volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure their behaviour towards children is appropriate and to monitor their compliance with the School's Child Protection Program.

Performance and development reviews are undertaken regularly for all staff and include consideration of performance against the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the requirements of the Child Protection Program. For example, ensuring that a staff member has not breached any of the School's reporting procedures or the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Child Safe Recruitment and Other Legislation

Our recruitment practices are subject to State and Federal anti-discrimination legislation (see our Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination policy) and the requirements of the Privacy Act when obtaining, using, disclosing, and storing information from applicants and referees (see our Privacy Policy).

Working with Children Checks Policy

Source of Obligation

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Victoria) (the Act) aims to protect children from harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them have their suitability to do so checked by a government body.

The Act aims to prevent those who pose a risk to children from working or volunteering with them.

A WWC Check will apply to any person who is engaged by Korowa as an employee, a School Council member, a self-employed person, a Volunteer, Third Party Contractors (who have or are likely to have direct contact with children), a supervisor of child employees, part of practical training through an educational or vocational course, unpaid community work under a court order, a minister of religion or performing duties of a religious vocation, an officer of a body corporate, a member of a committee of management of an unincorporated body or a member of a partnership.

Who Needs a WWC Check?

Subject to the exemptions referred to below, any worker (including volunteers) who engages in child-related work that involves direct contact with a child (being a person under 18 years of age) needs a Working with Children Check (WWC Check).

Section 3 of the Act defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

What is Child Related Work?

Child-related work is defined in section 9 of the Act as voluntary or paid work, in any of the occupational categories listed in the Act, that usually involves direct contact with a child.

For the purposes of the Act work will not be 'child-related work' by reason only of occasional direct work with children that is incidental to the work.

Child-Related Work for Ministers of Religion

The Act defines child-related work for ministers of religion more broadly than for other occupations. All ministers of religion are required to get a WWC Check unless the contact they have with children is only occasional and always incidental to their work.

This would include for example having children in their congregation, attendance at schools or school camps even when all their contact with children is supervised. An example of when a minister of religion would not require a WWC Check is a minister conducting purely administrative roles within a church's bureaucracy.

The following are considered to be child-related work:

- Mentoring and counselling services for children
- Direct provision of child health services
- Clubs, associations, movements, societies or other bodies (including bodies of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature)
- Educational and care services, child care centres, nanny services and other child care
- Coaching and tuition services for children
- Any religious organisation where children form part of the congregation
- Boarding houses or other residential services for children and overnight camps for children
- Transport services specifically for children, including school bus services and taxi services for children with a disability and supervision of school road crossings
- Commercial photography services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities
- Commercial talent competitions for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities
- Commercial entertainment or party services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities

Key Exemptions

People engaged in the following types of work are not required to have a WWC Check:

- Teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- Parents or close relatives volunteering in an activity in which their child participates or normally participates
- Students, aged 18 or 19, undertaking volunteer work organised or held at School
- Victorian or Australian Federal Police officers
- Workers, who usually live in another state or territory, visiting Victoria to engage in child-related work (only up to 30 days within the same calendar year).
- All children under the age of 18

Note: Some drivers accredited under the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 (Vic) who were engaging in child-related work were previously exempt from the Check. These drivers must now pass the Check to continue this work.

In line with the School's risk-based approach to child safety and protection, where parent volunteers are volunteering at off-site activities, such as excursions or camps, the School requires that these parent volunteers undergo a Working with Children Check clearance as a matter of best practice.

How to Apply for a WWC Check?

A worker who engages in child related work is responsible for applying for his or her own WWC Check. An employer can not apply on behalf of a worker.

To apply:

1. Fill out an online application for at: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au
2. Upon completion of the application, you will be provided with an online receipt
3. Take application summary and printed receipt, a passport-sized photo and proof of identity to a participating Australia Post retail outlet
4. If the WWC Check is for paid work, a fee is payable for a five-year clearance
5. If applying outside Victoria, the following must be posted to the Victorian Department of Justice:
 - An application summary and receipt or the completed paper form signed in front of a certifying officer
 - A signed statement by a certifying officer confirming they have witnessed your signature
 - Certified true copies of your identification documents
 - 2 passport-sized photos, one certified on the back by the certifying officer and the other attached to the application summary or paper form
 - A bank cheque or money order for the fee if you are a paid worker

Mail to:

Working With Children Check Unit
Department of Justice
GPO Box 1915
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

What is Checked?

The WWC Check obtains applicants' national criminal histories including:

- Convictions (spent or unspent)
- Non-convictions charges (for serious sexual, violent or drug offences)
- Acquittals because of mental impairment
- Guilty pleas
- Juvenile records from when you were under 18 years of age
- Findings of courts, Corrections Victoria, the Department of Human Services and information from employers or any other source considered relevant
- Formal findings of guilt
- Pending charges

The criminal offences relevant to a WWC Check are:

- Serious sexual offences
- Serious violent offences
- Serious drug-related offences
- Offences against the Working with Children Act 2005 (Victoria)
- Offences linked to the safety of children

Outcome of the WWC Check

There are only two results for a WWC Check – a clearance to work with children or a Negative Notice barring an applicant from working with children.

Where the outcome is a clearance, the applicant will receive a text message on their mobile phone confirming they have passed the Check and will then receive a WWC Check Card in the mail.

An Employee WWC Check Card allows workers to engage in any paid or voluntary child-related work. A Volunteer WWC Check Card can only be used for voluntary child-related work. The card, which is valid for five years, has the worker's name, signature, photograph, card number and expiry date.

Clearance

Cleared applicants will be subjected to ongoing monitoring for relevant new records which could lead to the card being suspended or revoked before the five-year expiry date.

Negative Notice

Where an applicant has failed the Check, they will be issued with a Negative Notice. The Notice will bar an applicant from engaging in child-related work, even if they are directly supervised, from the date of notice. A copy of the Notice will be sent to all the organisations listed in the application but they will not be notified of the reasons for the Notice.

Once issued with a Negative Notice, an applicant cannot reapply for a WWC Check for five years, unless their circumstances have changed, which can include: a pending charge being withdrawn or dismissed by a court; being found not guilty of a pending charge; being no longer required to report under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Victoria); being no longer subject to an extended supervision or detention order under the Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005 (Victoria) or Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 (Victoria).

Applicants can appeal a Negative Notice by making an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal within 28 days of the decision.

Worker Obligations

Upon receiving clearance, it is compulsory that the worker show their WWC Check Card to Korowa's HR Manager and provide their Card and Application Receipt numbers. This information is recorded by the HR Manager in the Synergetic database.

The worker must notify the Victorian Department of Justice within 21 days of any changes to their name, residential address, birth date or phone numbers provided in the application. The worker must notify the Department of the details of a new organisation they are starting child-related work with within 21 days. The worker must stop working with children immediately if their WWC Check Card has been suspended during a reassessment.

The worker must not let another person use their WWC Check Card for child-related work and must lodge a renewal form before the Card expires.

Korowa's Obligations

Korowa must:

- Not engage anyone in child-related work who does not have a WWC Check Card
- Not allow anyone who has a Negative Notice to undertake child-related work, even if they are directly supervised or exempt
- Set up a process to ensure new staff and volunteers notify the Department within 21 days of commencing child-related work with Korowa
- Ensure workers engaged in paid work have an Employee WWC Check Card and not a Volunteer Card

Penalties

It is an offence to work with children without a valid WWC Check Card or Application receipt while your Check is being processed. It is an offence for anyone to apply for or engage in child-related work if they have been issued a Negative Notice. The maximum penalty is two years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

The School must take reasonable steps to ensure they do not engage or continue to engage a person in child-related work who does not hold a valid WWC Check Card. The penalty for organisations is a significant fine.

Record Keeping Obligations

For the School's record keeping obligation relating to WWC Checks, refer to page 67.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2018

Child Protection Training

Korowa recognises that without training and education of our staff, School Council members and Direct Contact Volunteers, our policies and procedures will not operate to effectively keep our students safe and protect them from abuse.

Korowa staff, School Council members and Direct Contact Volunteers receive child protection training when they first commence their role at the School and are required to complete ongoing training on child protection issues at least annually.

All staff, School Council members and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to undertake role-appropriate training through our Child Protection Training course which consists of the following modules:

Module 1	An Overview of Our Child Protection Program
Module 2	The Meaning of Child Abuse and its Key Risk Indicators
Module 3	The Legal and Regulatory Framework for Child Protection in Victoria
Module 4	Victorian Child Safe Standards
Module 5	Our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
Module 6	How to Respond to a Child Protection Incident
Module 7	Child Protection Reporting
Module 8	Working with Children Checks
Module 9	Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

The School's Child Protection Officers, and other selected staff, undertake additional training as considered appropriate to their roles.

Child Protection Training Record Keeping

Through the School's online child protection training course, the School creates and maintains electronic records of child protection training completed by staff, Council members and Direct Contact Volunteers.

Cultural Awareness of Child Protection Issues

At Korowa we believe that the safety of children is dependent on the existence of a child safe culture within our School community. We have developed the following work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to create a child safe culture including:

- a holistic approach to child protection through this Child Protection Program
- the appointment of the School's Child Protection Officers
- establishing key child protection principles in our Child Protection and Safety Policy
- establishing clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with students through our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- educating our staff and Direct Contact Volunteers through our Child Protection Training
- clear procedures for reporting alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse
- clear procedures for reporting Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People
- recognition that children from culturally diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- recognition that children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support
- clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in protecting children
- establishing comprehensive child protection record keeping procedures to ensure that the School can evidence reasonable precautions taken to prevent abuse at the school in accordance with our Child Protection Risk Management strategies.

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

Please refer to the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy on page 35 of this Handbook.

Participation and Empowerment of Children

Children often do not report abuse because they:

- feel uncomfortable
- do not recognise behaviours as abuse or grooming
- do not know how to raise their concerns or make a report

Korowa recognises that in order to achieve a child safe environment at the School which meets students' intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral needs, students need to be involved in the creation and maintenance of such an environment.

It is our policy that we have simple and accessible processes in place to assist children (including those from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with a disability) to develop appropriate knowledge and skills to identify and communicate when they do not feel safe.

It is our policy that relevant staff members are trained on methods of empowering children and encouraging their participation.

This is done through various work systems, practices, policies and procedures. This includes:

Student Wellbeing – Child Protection

Wellbeing support is given to students for their development as a person. It relates to the total care of students and involves tending to both the academic and non-academic needs of students including emotional and social wellbeing. Korowa's complete Student Wellbeing Policy can be found in the CompliSpace module on Konnect.

Korowa is committed to providing a safe, supportive and social environment. A range of student wellbeing policies and procedures are designed to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of our students, and to deliver age appropriate education to all students about:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- child abuse awareness and a child's right to be safe
- a child's right to make decisions about their body and their privacy
- how students can raise concerns about abuse
- resilience and coping with adversity
- any concerns they raise will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately in accordance with the processes and procedures outlined in the Korowa Child Protection Program document and the Student Wellbeing @ Korowa staff handbook
- our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
- behaviour expectations for students

We are committed to ensuring that child abuse reporting procedures are age appropriate, simple, and accessible for all children including children from culturally diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

Information about these topics, as well as other child safety and wellbeing topics, is made available to all students through various age appropriate wellbeing initiatives. Child safety and wellbeing topics are also incorporated into the School's curriculum.

Students with a Disability

The School has an obligation to students with a disability to both ensure that they are afforded the same level of educational and wellbeing care as any other student at the School, and consider how each policy and procedure the School establishes and implements may affect students with a disability.

Korowa is committed to ensuring that we fulfil our legal obligations including those related to discrimination and disability standards (refer to our Disability Discrimination Policy on page 77).

The School recognises that students with a disability will not only require additional assistance to participate and engage in School activities in a safe and supportive manner, but also that there are specific child protection risks that arise in relation to students with a disability. This may include for example, stricter screening procedures and training for staff who assist students who require help with personal activities such as toileting or dressing.

Students with a disability at the School may also require varied reporting avenues or systems to students without a disability and the School has considered this when creating and implementing its Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse.

Cultural Diversity Policy

Children from culturally diverse backgrounds are children who identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.

They include children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent that identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Korowa values and respects the racial and cultural diversity of our students and is committed to ensuring that the backgrounds of all students are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued so that racial and cultural differences do not compromise a student's safety and wellbeing.

It is our policy that:

- we identify children from culturally diverse backgrounds when they are enrolled in the School
- we employ appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of these children as required
- we encourage participation and empowerment of these children in the development of these strategies as appropriate
- we consider these children when developing and implementing policies and procedures related to child protection at the School
- we educate our staff about these cultural differences and the strategies and procedures we have employed as required

When supporting students from culturally diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students, or those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, it is critical that the School provides culturally appropriate support. Where possible the School will work with relevant cultural support groups, ensure that confidentiality of the family is maintained and engage an interpreter when communicating with the student's family.

Similarly, when supporting international students who have been impacted by abuse, the School will consider appropriate measures to be taken for the welfare of the students, including additional support where appropriate given that the student's family may not be present to provide support within the home environment.

Students from refugee backgrounds who have been impacted by abuse may also be experiencing trauma, dislocation and loss. Sensitive consideration should be given when determining how to support the student and their family.

Disability Discrimination Policy

Disability Discrimination

Disability discrimination occurs when a person with a disability is treated less favourably than a person without a disability, in the same or similar circumstances.

The definition of disability includes a wide range of impairments including physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities. It also covers discrimination against a person because of a physical disfigurement or a disease (e.g. Human Immunodeficiency Virus – HIV).

Korowa's Policy

Korowa is committed to providing a safe and educationally supportive environment that values and encourages participation by all students and staff, including those with disabilities.

It is our policy that:

- Students with disabilities can participate in education and training without discrimination
- Students with disabilities have opportunities to access the School curriculum and achieve educational outcomes, in the same manner as students without disabilities

- Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary, to ensure students with disabilities are able to participate in all activities available to students without disabilities
- Individualised programs will be developed for students with disabilities in consultation with parents/guardians and relevant experts
- All processes are accessible and transparent
- Disability discrimination prevention strategies are reviewed on a regular basis against best practice

Discrimination, Harassment and Victimization

Korowa does not tolerate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of any type including disability discrimination.

This is achieved by:

- Informing all staff and students that disability discrimination is not acceptable
- Ensuring staff and students demonstrate inclusive behaviours as articulated in the School's values and behaviour expectations documents
- Establishing strategies and programs as required to prevent harassment and victimisation of persons with a disability
- Ensuring strategies and programs (as required) extend to not only students but also to their parents/guardians, who may experience discrimination as a result of their support role to a person with a disability, or who may have a disability themselves. These strategies and programs will be considered and implemented on a case by case basis

'Same Basis' Opportunities

The fundamental concept in operation at Korowa to prevent disability discrimination is the 'same basis' concept. This means treatment of students with a disability must be on the 'same basis' as students without a disability, when presented with opportunities and choices offered to students without disabilities.

Reasonable Adjustments

Korowa will provide reasonable adjustments upon consultation with the prospective student with a disability and their parents/guardians to assist the student to undertake education offered.

Whether an adjustment is reasonable will depend on balancing the student's learning needs with the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with a disability, the School, staff and other students.

Depending on the needs of the student, adjustments may include modifications to School facilities, procedures and resources.

Modifications to enable student access to School facilities and participate in everyday School life may include adjustments to toilets, ramps, safety railings, to enable students with disabilities to access these facilities safely.

Korowa is not required to provide adjustments where doing so would cause unjustifiable hardship to the School.

All processes for adjustments within the School, including review and grievance procedures, will be transparent. All decisions will be made in a timely way that optimises the student's participation in education and training.

Unjustifiable hardship is determined via an individual assessment of the prospective student's needs balanced with the costs associated with additional staffing, the provision of special resources or modifications and health and safety and duty of care requirements.

Disability Information

Information obtained in relation to the student's disability will remain confidential and will only be disclosed for the purposes of making adjustments or in accordance with a lawful requirement.

Complaints

Complaints of unlawful discrimination should be made to the School.

Complaints will be properly and effectively dealt with using the School's complaint procedures, including conciliation in the first instance.

Staff Responsibility

All staff must follow the guidelines as set out in this policy.

Implementation

This policy is implemented, on a case by case basis, through a combination of:

- Staff training to equip staff with knowledge, skills and understanding to enable students with disabilities to participate in the full range of educational programs or services, on the same basis and to the same extent as students without disabilities
- Student and parent/guardian education and information
- Effective management of the enrolment and accommodation of students with disabilities
- The development of an inclusive culture within the school community through the School's values and behaviour expectations documents
- Ongoing evaluation, monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the management of students with disabilities via the Wellbeing Team
- Effective communication and incident notification procedures
- Effective record keeping procedures
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary

Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Korowa may take disciplinary action.

Related Policies

- Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy
- Counselling Services (Student) Policy
- Excursions Policy
- Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Policy
- Medical Appointments Policy

Key Reference

This policy has been developed having regard to the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2018

Child Protection Risk Management

Korowa has adopted a proactive risk management approach to child protection by developing and implementing strategies to identify and mitigate our child protection risks based on:

- the nature of all School environments
- the activities students undertake at the School (including the provision of services by contractors or outside the School's physical environment)
- physical and online environments that exist at the School
- the characteristics and needs of all of our students

Risk Management Strategies

Korowa has implemented the following risk mitigation strategies to ensure that the School maintains a proactive approach to our duty of care in protecting children from harm and complying with our legal and regulatory obligations:

- this Child Protection Program, including our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- a comprehensive Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy, implemented through training and communication
- induction and ongoing training provided to staff, School Council members and Direct Contact Volunteers, at least annually, about identifying risks of child abuse in the School environment, their obligations and responsibilities for managing these risks, how to report and respond to child protection incidents, and the School's current child safety standards
- the appointment of the School's Child Protection Officers who are 'Child Protection Champions' at the School and receive specialised, additional training to ensure that any concerns about child safety and protection in the School environment held by students, staff, volunteers, Third Party Contractors and parents may be discussed in a safe and supportive environment
- extensive policies and procedures relating to excursions and camps ensuring that child protection risks specific to excursions and overnight stays are identified and controls are put in place
- ongoing, periodic reviews of all physical School environments to eliminate physical isolation risks, such as solid classroom doors or rooms with no windows, or implement procedural controls where elimination is not possible
- specific procedures for verifying the Working with Children Check status of all external providers and Third Party Contractors, who may have direct contact with students, to ensure that students remain safe in all School environments both internal and external to the School grounds
- clear procedures for reporting Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People to ensure all risks specific to employee conduct are identified and controls are put in place
- identifying and recording all risks of child abuse in all School environments in a child protection risk register, and assessing the risks with regard to the likelihood of the risk event occurring and the potential consequences if it was to occur
- a system of assurance through which risks of child abuse, and actions taken to reduce or remove these risks (risk controls), are recorded. The system is also used to monitor risk controls and to evaluate their overall effectiveness on a regular basis

Korowa's Assurance System

The School has developed and implemented an online Assurance system as one strategy to manage the risk of child abuse in School environments.

Our Assurance system is an online risk and compliance workflow management tool that integrates with our Child Protection Program to provide a system of risk management, compliance and continuous improvement based on international standards.

Through this system key compliance obligations are captured and converted into plain English questions that are assigned via email to responsible individuals for action. Each individual is provided with a calendar view of their compliance performance via an online browser. Unactioned tasks are escalated and reported to allow the School to monitor its compliance performance in real time.

Unactioned tasks are escalated and reported to allow the School to monitor and record its compliance performance in real-time. The School also uses this risk management system as a method of evaluating and reviewing the ongoing effectiveness of the implementation of its risk measures and controls.

Disciplinary procedures

Where a staff member breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Program, Korowa may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

Where a Third Party Contractor breaches their obligations under this Program and their concurrent obligations as required in SAMS4Schools, Korowa may terminate their relationship with that party.

Where any other member of the School community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Program, Korowa may take appropriate action.

Continuous Improvement and Review

Korowa is committed to continuous improvement in all its operations including this Child Protection Program.

It is the responsibility of the Risk and Compliance Co-ordinator, in consultation with the School Executive and School Council to regularly review our Child Protection Program to ensure that it is working in practice and that the School is meeting its legal and regulatory obligations relating to child protection.

This Program will be reviewed in 2018

Additional Resources

The following resources provide further information on Child Protection matters.

The Victorian Child Safe Standards

1. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Safe Standards Home Page, 2017
2. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Safe Standards Resources Page, 2017
3. Minister for Education, Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, *Ministerial Order 870*, Victorian Government Gazette, 7 January 2016

Mandatory Reporting

1. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Department of Human Services protocol, Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
2. Department of Education and Training, Child Protection – Understand Your Obligations to Protect Children
3. Victorian Institute of Teaching, Resources and support for principals
4. Victorian Institute of Teaching, The Victorian teaching Profession Code of Conduct

Responding to Child Protection Incidents

1. Department of Education and Training and Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection, Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools, 2016
2. Department of Education and Training and Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection, Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse, 2016
3. Department of Education and Training and Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection, Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools, 2016

Working with Children Checks

1. Department of Justice and Regulation, Working With Children Check website

Reportable Conduct Scheme

1. Commission for Children and Young People, Reportable Conduct Scheme, 2016

General Obligation to Report

1. Department of Justice and Regulation, Failure to Disclose Offence Fact Sheet, 2015

Duty to Protect Students from Abuse

1. Department of Justice and Regulation, Failure to protect: a new criminal offence to protect children from sexual abuse, 2015

Child Related HR Practices

1. Department of Health & Human Services, Human resources practices for child safe organisations, 2016
2. Department of Health & Human Services, Recruitment practices for child safe organisations, 2016

Korowa Child Protection Procedures

Reporting Procedures

Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and School Council Members

Korowa Anglican Girls' School is a Child Safe School. We have a zero tolerance stance on child abuse and are committed to the protection of all children from all forms of abuse.

Child abuse situations can be very complex, not only from the perspective of ascertaining whether abuse has occurred but also in understanding what steps to take to protect a child.

It is important to remember at all times that the safety and welfare of the child are paramount.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

If you have a concern that a child may be experiencing abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should immediately raise your concerns with one of the Korowa Child Protection officers. They have received additional training and assist Korowa in co-ordinating responses to child protection incidents. The Korowa Child Protection Officers are:

- The Deputy Principal
- The School Chaplain
- The ELC Co-ordinator
- The School Counsellor

What steps must I take if I have concerns about a child's safety?

Step 1

- If you believe the child is in immediate danger call the police on 000. If this is the case the Principal should also be notified immediately

Step 2

- Clearly document your concerns and any observations you have made using the template located at page 99 of this Handbook
- Be specific about the words used (if the matter has been brought to your attention by the child or any other person)
- If the child has spoken to you directly do not promise them that you will keep the matter confidential

Step 3

- Contact a Korowa Child Protection Officer to discuss your concerns

What will Korowa do in response to your report?

- Ensure accurate records of discussions are kept
- Ensure the matter is handled sensitively and in a confidential manner
- Ensure any required mandatory or legislative reports required by the School are made
- Take all reasonable steps to remove the risk of further harm to the child
- Conduct a review of the Child Safe Risks in the Korowa Risk Register and corresponding controls to address any further risks identified
- Korowa's Child Protection Officers will support you in understanding and other legal obligations you may have

“All reasonable steps” may include:

- If Korowa determine that the student is in immediate danger, the police will be contacted and their advice followed
- All other reporting processes will be followed as outlined in the Korowa Child Protection Program Handbook and Korowa’s Notifying Reportable Conduct Policy
- If the alleged offender is a Korowa employee, volunteer, contractor, parent, or student, we will ensure that access to the student on the part of the alleged perpetrator is removed whilst on School grounds.

This will be achieved by removing the employee for a period of time on paid leave until such time as the investigation is complete; or, putting in place individualised intervention strategies and structures to ensure that the alleged offender has no contact on School grounds with the reporting student. In both cases, the alleged perpetrator’s access to the online School environment will be removed

- If any aspect of the School environment has contributed to the alleged abuse, immediate action will be taken to reduce or remove the risk, as per our procedure outlined on p48 of the Korowa Child Protection Program Handbook (The Obligation to Act to Protect)
- The relevant Korowa Child Protection Officer will oversee the implementation of a range of support measures which will include a variety of case specific School based interventions, and may involve referral to an external specialist. Further detail regarding the staff appointed to support student wellbeing (Wellbeing Leaders) and the approaches taken by Korowa staff to support students with wellbeing needs can be found in the Student Wellbeing at Korowa Staff Handbook

The overriding consideration in any child safety matter is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. Please note that reporting the matter internally does not release you from other legal and regulatory reporting obligations you may have, namely:

- The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence
- The Obligation to Act to Protect
- The Obligation to Make a Mandatory Report (Mandatory Reporting)
- The Obligation to Notify Reportable Conduct.

Reporting a Sexual Offence

Under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (s 327), anyone aged 18 years or over must make a report to the Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person aged 18 years or over. Failure to make a report without reasonable excuse is an offence and carries a prison term.

If a report is made to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in accordance with Mandatory Reporting Obligations an additional report to the Police will not usually be required unless further information is obtained.

This obligation applies to anyone aged 18 years or over, including all non-teaching staff, volunteers and students aged 18 and over. The legislation also applies to teaching staff if not already covered by the mandatory reporting obligation.

Acting to Protect

Where a person in a position of authority at Korowa (Staff, volunteers who have direct supervision of children, the School Council, the Principal) become aware that a staff member, volunteer, contractor, or other person associated with Korowa poses a substantial risk of committing a sexual

offence against a student or students, that person has a positive duty to take immediate action to ensure that the student or students are protected from that risk.

Korowa has a duty of care to protect all students from foreseeable risks while at school or engaging in School activities.

What do I do?

Where any staff member, volunteer, or other person in a position of authority at the time, becomes aware of a risk of a sexual offence against a student or students under their care, they should immediately:

- take reasonable steps which would remove or reduce the risk to the student or students, which may include immediately removing the person from contact with the student or students
- report the matter to a Korowa Child Protection Officer and the Principal as soon as practicable
- Making a Mandatory Report
- The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYFA) requires that mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection when they believe that a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection from significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse.

What Constitutes a Belief?

Forming a belief is a thinking process where a person is more inclined to accept rather than reject that there is significant harm for the child or young person.

There may be reasonable grounds for forming a belief if:

- a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child (often talking about themselves) states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused
- someone who knows the child states that there has been abuse
- there are physical or behavioural indicators of physical or sexual abuse

Important Points

- A professional does not have to prove that abuse has taken place—they only need to have reasonable grounds for their belief
- Permission is not needed from parents to make a notification nor do they need to be informed that a notification is being made
- If a professional makes a notification in good faith they cannot be held legally liable regardless of the outcome of the notification
- Notification shall not be held to constitute a breach of professional etiquette or ethics
- The name of the notifier is not disclosed unless the notifier gives written permission
- The Principal has ultimate duty of care

Procedure at Korowa Anglican Girls' School

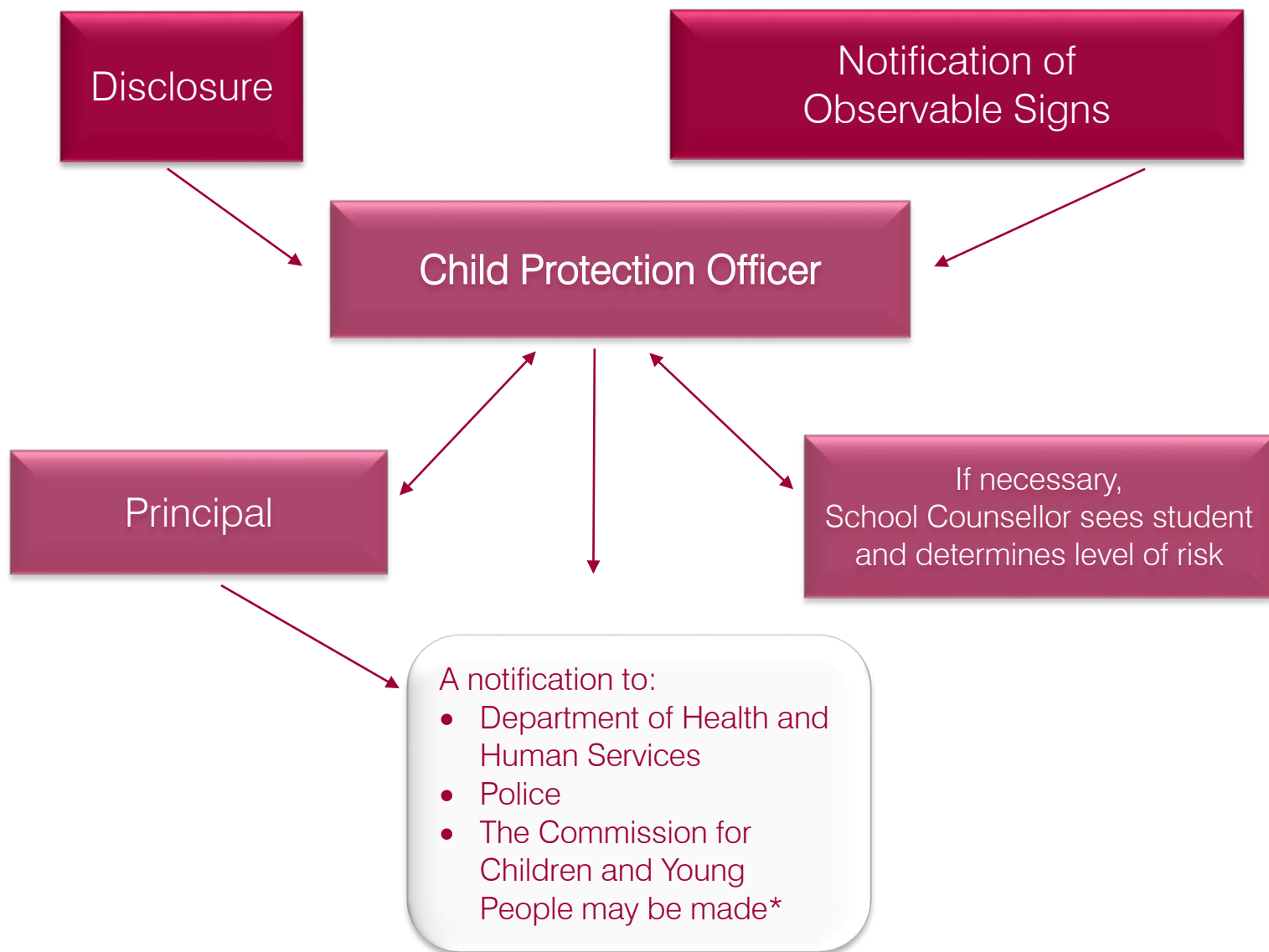
1. Individual teachers or the Health Carer should make observations and document any concerns noting the exact words, incidents, events or observations that led them to form a suspicion that a child may be in need of protection. A report may be necessary
2. If a staff member has a suspicion that a person associated with Korowa (staff, parents, volunteers, contractors etc.) poses a risk of committing a sexual offence against a child these concerns should be discussed with a relevant Child Protection Officer or with the School Counsellor

3. The School Counsellor must be informed and will then further explore the concerns. The School Counsellor will consult with the Principal if there are grounds for notification
4. The notification to Child Protection Services will be made by either the Principal or School Counsellor in conjunction with the teacher or School Health Carer, in a timely and sensitive manner
5. Details of concerns and the decision made to report or not, will be documented and kept in the Student's Counselling file
6. If a teacher or the School Health Carer has expressed concern about a child and the Head of Junior School, Deputy Principal and/or the School Counsellor believe the matter is not reportable and the teacher or School Health Carer disagrees, they can approach the Principal directly. If, in their opinion, their concern is still not addressed and they have a belief that the child is at risk of significant harm, they must ask Child Protection Services for guidance or report the case themselves, but must inform the Principal prior to this
7. The Principal will decide who in the School needs to be informed, bearing in mind that confidentiality in the interests of both the child and family is vital
8. If, following a report, a family approaches the school, any interview conducted must be undertaken by the Principal (or her delegate) and one other member of staff to provide support in what could be a difficult situation. The focus of such a meeting should be the welfare of the child, not on justifying the actions of the staff involved. The anonymity of the staff member who raised the concerns will be protected
9. Facilities will be made available for a worker from the Department of Human Services Child Protection to interview a student at School where necessary. The Principal must be notified beforehand and a member of staff, preferably the School Counsellor, will be present at such an interview
10. Support for the reporting teacher or Health Carer will be available through the Principal, Head of Junior School, Deputy Principal, School Counsellor and/or School Chaplain. This support will continue to be provided throughout the period that the Department of Human Services Child Protection is involved. The staff member can also seek support via the School's Employee Assistance Program

Communicating with Child Protection Services or Police

Should anyone from Child Protection Services or Police contact Korowa seeking information about a student, the call should be put through to the School Counsellor who will verify the authenticity of the call and enlist the support of staff as needed. The Principal, Deputy Principal and Head of Junior School should be notified following such a call.

Staff Response in the Korowa Context



* In the Mandatory Reporting context, if a teacher or the School Health Carer has expressed concern about a child and the Head of Junior School, Deputy Principal and/or the School Counsellor believe the matter is not reportable and the teacher or School Health Carer disagrees, they can approach the Principal directly. If, in their opinion, their concern is still not addressed and they have a belief that the child is at risk of significant harm, they must ask Child Protection Services for guidance or report the case themselves, but must inform the Principal prior to this.

Other Members of the Community (Indirect Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Parents)

Korowa Anglican Girls' School is a Child Safe School. We have a zero tolerance stance on child abuse and are committed to the protection of all children from all forms of abuse.

Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, students, parents/guardians or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse should contact one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

Korowa's Child Protection Policy sets out the procedure for other members of the community to make a report.

To support this process, Staff must refer members of the community to Reception immediately if they have a concern that a child may be experiencing any form of abuse.

Reception will undertake the following steps to support the reporter to fulfil their reporting obligations:

1. Ask whether they believe the child is in immediate danger and if so that they should contact the Police on 000. If this is the case the Principal should also be notified immediately
2. If there is no immediate danger, advise them that Korowa has appointed Child Protection Officers who receive special training that allows them to deal with child protection concerns both sensitively and effectively
3. Advise them who the Korowa Child Protection officers are:
 - Deputy Principal
 - Head of Junior School
 - School Counsellor
 - School Chaplain
 - ELC Co-ordinator
4. Contact one of the Child Protection Officers immediately (either the one requested by the reporting party or an alternate if that person is not available) and arrange a time to meet as soon as practicable
5. Advise parties that the Korowa Child Protection Officers are also available to answer any questions that they may have with respect to our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program

What will Korowa do in response to your report?

1. Ensure accurate records of discussions are kept
2. Ensure the matter is handled sensitively and in a confidential manner
3. Ensure any required mandatory or legislative reports required by the School are made
4. Take all reasonable steps to remove the risk of further harm to the child
5. Conduct a review of the Child Safe Risks in the Korowa Risk Register and corresponding controls to address any further risks identified
6. Korowa's Child Protection Officers will support you in understanding any other legal obligations you may have

Students

If any student is feeling unsafe or has concerns for their safety or that of any other student, they should:

1. Discuss the matter with any Korowa staff that they feel comfortable with
2. The staff member will advise the student that they need to document the conversation and confirm whether the student will feel comfortable with the School Counsellor or another Child Protection Officer assisting in recording their concerns
3. The Korowa staff member (together with the Child Protection Officers where the child has consented) will discuss the matter with the student and take appropriate notes, observations and records
4. If the Child Protection Officer was not involved in the initial conversation with the student, the staff member will then report directly to one of the Child Protection Officers

What will Korowa do in response to a student report?

1. Ensure accurate records of discussions are kept
2. Ensure the matter is handled sensitively and in a confidential manner
3. Ensure any required mandatory or legislative reports required by the School are made
4. Take all reasonable steps to remove the risk of further harm to the child
5. Conduct a review of the Child Safe Risks in the Korowa Risk Register and corresponding controls to address any further risks identified

Further age appropriate information on Student reporting procedures is contained in the Student Record Book, along with various simple infographics for younger students.

Vexatious Claims

Whilst there may be instances where a claim by a Student or past Student may be considered vexatious in nature and not founded on fact, Korowa has a zero tolerance for failing to report all allegations of suspected abuse.

All claims of alleged abuse must be reported and will be thoroughly investigated via the Reporting Procedure on page 42 of the Handbook. If the claim is found to be vexatious appropriate counselling and support will be provided to the Student and their family.

Retrospective Claims

Korowa is committed to responding to all allegations of Child Abuse, including allegations of misconduct that may have occurred in the past. Any person who raises a concern with Korowa around abuse allegations must be directed to the Principal.

What will Korowa do in response to a retrospective allegation?

1. Ensure accurate records of discussions are kept
2. Ensure the matter is handled sensitively and in a confidential manner
3. Ensure any required mandatory or legislative reports required by the School are made
4. Take any further action required of them to ensure appropriate redress of the matter if required

Recruitment Practices

Child Safe Recruitment Checklist – Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers

Considerations when Recruiting New Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers

When recruiting new staff or Direct Contact Volunteers some important child safety areas for assessment include the applicant's:

- motivation to work with children (personal or professional)
- relevant and verifiable child-related work experience
- understanding of professional boundaries
- communication skills

Specialist roles may present different child safety risks for the School. Examples of specialist roles include the roles of School Health Carer, School Counsellor, sports coach, camps instructor or music teacher.

Additional advice on matters such as handling information obtained through a criminal records check can be found in references listed at the end of the checklist.

Checklist for Staff Selection

This checklist for staff selection strengthens our focus on child safety in our staff recruitment and employment process and minimises the risk of appointing a person who poses a child safety risk.

The checklist will be used to enhance existing recruitment practices and policies used by Korowa to select suitable and appropriately qualified staff.

This checklist reflects the specific Korowa setting and takes into account the requirements of each role. Korowa also considers the diversity of all children, (including but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, and children who are vulnerable when recruiting staff.

The following selection procedures may be undertaken in any order and ensure that Korowa has multiple selection and screening processes in place during the recruitment process for child-connected work. Over-reliance on Working with Children Checks or failure to properly check references may result in a failure to protect children and schools.

Phase 1: Pre-selection

Ensuring transparency and natural justice in the selection process

Questions	Yes	No
1. Does the position description reflect the requirements of the child safe standards?		
2. Has the applicant been provided with a statement that sets out the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding: child safety, and essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety?		
3. 3. Has the applicant been informed about the School's child safety practices including the School's child safety code of conduct and the Child Protection and Safety Policy?		
4. 4. Has the applicant been informed of their role in ensuring a child safe environment?		
5. 5. Has the applicant been advised that the selection process will involve a rigorous background check including a current Working with Children Check (WWCC)?		

Phase 2: Screening/Background Check
 Verifying the Applicant's Identity, Suitability and Qualifications

Questions	Yes	No
1. Have you checked at least two forms of personal identification (e.g. driver's licence, passport?) Is the name and address the same as those provided by the applicant?		
2. Does the applicant have an original academic transcript or qualification/s that confirms their claims about their qualifications or registrations?		
3. If the applicant is registered by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) have you verified the registration and ensured that it is current? (noting that a teacher registered with VIT does not need a Working with Children Check)		
4. Have you sighted and retained a copy of the applicant's current Working with Children Check?		
5. Are there any unexplained gaps in the applicant's employment history? If so, are there satisfactory explanations such as travel, study leave, family leave?		
6. Have you conducted any other background searches (e.g. by using Google, Facebook or LinkedIn?)		
7. Has the applicant nominated at least two referees including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the current or most recent employer, and ▪ direct supervisor/line manager 		
8. Is there any personal relationship between the applicant and his or her previous supervisor/manager (this may affect the objectivity of the reference)?		
9. Have you checked with the referee that the work history and previous employment details the applicant has provided are accurate?		
10. Has the referee(s) directly supervised the applicant and observed their work with children?		
11. Would the referee(s) employ the person again?		
12. Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?		
13. Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant's adherence to the organisation's code of conduct?		
14. Have you asked the referee(s) about a time when they observed the applicant managing the behaviour of a child?		
15. If the reference is in writing, have you contacted the referee to confirm authenticity?		
16. Does the applicant have experience working with children outside their employment (e.g. volunteering, private tutoring or coaching, non-commercial child-minding etc.)?		

Position Descriptions for Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for understanding and applying the Korowa's Child Safety Policies and Procedures, including identifying and addressing risks, identifying child abuse indicators, management of disclosures, reporting including mandatory reporting and complying with the Schools Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.

Teaching staff must be aware of issues relating to Aboriginal, cultural and linguistic diversity, among students with whom you will have direct contact, in addressing child protection teaching and disclosures.

Non-Teaching staff are responsible for understanding and applying the Korowa's Child Safety Policies and Procedures, including identifying and reporting risks, identifying child abuse indicators, management of disclosures, and internal and external reporting obligations.

Where students are under their care, non-teaching staff must take all practicable measures to protect students where a risk to their safety has been identified.

Applicant Background Check Declaration

In order for Korowa Anglican Girls' School to fulfil its Duty of Care obligations a thorough background check will be undertaken for applicants during the recruitment process.

This information will be stored securely and the information only provided to those responsible for making employment decisions. Recruitment decisions are made using only relevant information which relates to the Position Description and the School's Duty of Care responsibilities.

This information will be destroyed should the applicant be unsuccessful in obtaining the position unless the applicant consents to keeping the information on file for consideration for future positions. For information regarding Privacy, please see Korowa's Privacy Policy available on our website.

Applicant Declaration

The following declaration is a requirement when applying for employment at Korowa Anglican Girls' School.

I,understand and consent to Korowa Anglican Girls' School undertaking a background search and collecting information relevant to the position applied for.

I understand that information may be obtained from the following sources:

- Contacting referees
- Internet searches including but not limited to social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn
- Other relevant sources such as, but not limited to, National Police Checks, Working With Children Checks, media releases

Signed: Date:.....

Procedures for Visitors to the School (Indirect Contact Volunteers, External Education Providers and Third Party Contractors)

Indirect Contact Volunteers and External Education Providers

Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

Korowa may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Prior to External Education Providers and/or Indirect Contact Volunteers attending at the School to perform their services staff are required to ensure that they provide them with copies of:

- Our Child Protection and Safety Policy
- Our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Our Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy

The documents can be shared in soft copy via e-mail or through the School's website:

www.korowa.vic.edu.au/page/about/child-safe-school

Hard copies of these documents will also be available at Reception.

Staff must inform these providers that they will be required to confirm that they have read and understood the Policies and Code when they arrive on site and sign in.

Visitor Sign In

- All visitors to Korowa are required to sign in at Reception
- Visitors, other than those listed below, are required to acknowledge that they have read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. This will be made available to them at Reception.
- Indirect Contact Volunteers, External Education Providers and Third Party Contractors are required to acknowledge that they have read our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct. This may have been provided to them previously. If not, they are required to read the documents whilst at Reception
- All Visitors will be required to acknowledge, at sign in, that they have read and understood the documents applicable to them
- Reception staff will call the staff member responsible for the visitor and they must collect the visitor from Reception and accompany them to their destination
- Visitors are not to be left unattended and should never be left in direct contact with Students without a Korowa member of staff present
- Visitors should be walked back to Reception to sign out after their attendance at the School

Parent/Guardian Sign In

- Parents/Guardians are also required to sign in at either Reception or Junior School Reception when attending Korowa for a particular purpose, such as a meeting with a staff member or when volunteering in the classroom
- Parents/Guardians are not required to sign in when they are
- picking up or dropping off their child
- accessing Student Services/Junior School Reception for a particular purpose (such as dropping off an item of clothing)
- accessing the Uniform Shop
- accessing the School Cafeteria, Tuckies, between the hours of 7.30am and 10.00am
- attending special functions such as the Year 12 Induction Service
- observing before and after school co-curricular activities, as appropriate (i.e. Junior School Athletics Training)

Third Party Contractors

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the School must be registered through SAMS4Schools and a requirement of this registration is acknowledgment of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Prior to engaging any Third Party Contractors Staff, are required to contact the Property Manager to ensure the provider is registered with Sams4Schools. If the provider is not registered the Property Manager will arrange for registration.

No Third Party Contractor is to be engaged by any staff member unless they have received confirmation that the Provider has been registered and is compliant.

Training

Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and School Council Members

All Korowa Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and School Council Members receive training on the Korowa Child Protection Program. This training is a combination of face to face sessions as well as online modular training.

In particular, all Staff receive specific training as follows:

1. Face to face session with the School's external lawyers on their obligations under the new Child Safe Standards and broader Duty of Care obligations (July 2016)
2. Face to face session with CompliSpace (the providers of Korowa's online Governance Risk and Compliance System) on their specific legal obligations under the various Child Protection legislative requirements (July 2016)
3. Online Modular training through CompliSpace to test Staff's knowledge of Policies and Procedures at Korowa specifically (August 2016) and annually thereafter. The online training comprises the following modules:
 - Module 1** – An Overview of Our Child Protection Program
 - Module 2** – The Meaning of Child Abuse and its Key Risk Indicators
 - Module 3** – The Legal and Regulatory Framework for Child Protection in Victoria
 - Module 4** – Victorian Child Safe Standards
 - Module 5** – Our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
 - Module 6** – How to Respond to a Child Protection Incident
 - Module 7** – Child Protection Reporting
 - Module 8** – Working with Children Checks
 - Module 9** – Staff and Student Professional Boundaries
4. Other training as required. Ongoing training will be conducted at least annually

Child Protection Officers

In addition to the above training our Child Protection Officers undertake additional training that allows them to deal with child protection concerns both sensitively and effectively.

This training is a face to face session and an initial session was conducted in August 2016 by Child Wise www.childwise.org.au

This session was attended by Korowa's Child Protection Officers (as set out on page 40 of this Handbook) and the following Korowa staff:

- the Principal
- the Risk and Compliance Co-ordinator

Annual training will be provided to Korowa Child Protection Officers to assist them in understanding and discharging their duties as Child Protection Officers.

Families

The Korowa Child Protection Program will routinely be discussed at the annual Parent Information Evenings which take place for all year levels in early Term 1. Further to this, Child Protection issues may be addressed as part of the Pop Up Parenting Seminars. This will be on a needs basis.

Students Over the Age of 18

To ensure that Korowa students over the age of eighteen and thus regarded as adults from a legal perspective, have a clear understanding of their obligations in relation to Child Protection laws and regulations the Years 11 and 12 Personal Development Program will include activity(s) that ensure that the students clearly understand the positive obligations imposed on them by the law. In particular, it will ensure that students understand their general legal obligations to report child sexual abuse that has been committed, against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person over the age of 18 years (Crimes Act (Vic) s327).

Student Empowerment (Curriculum and Other Activities)

The K-12 Student Wellbeing Curriculum has been reviewed and includes a Protective Behaviours strand. The 2017 Protective Behaviours Program includes the following elements:

- The Prep -Year 5 Bodyworks Program ensures that participation and empowerment activities/understandings are included in a developmentally appropriate way
- The Prep -Year 5 Morning Meeting program reinforces the above, and includes reference to the supports accessible to students within and beyond the Korowa environment, and the process a student can follow when they identify that they are feeling unsafe
- The Year 6 -Year 12 Personal Development Program ensures that participation and empowerment activities/understandings are included in a developmentally appropriate way
- The Year 6 -Year 12 Advisory Time program reinforces the above, and includes reference to the supports accessible to students within and beyond the Korowa environment, and the process a student can follow when they identify that they are feeling unsafe
- The K -12 Wellbeing Program includes reference to developmentally appropriate participation and empowerment activities/understandings which reference safety in the online space
- The School Diary, includes age appropriate infographics which will outline the process students can follow when they identify that they are feeling unsafe
- Surveys of students, as appropriate. Such surveys might include, but are not limited to, ACER's Social and Emotional Wellbeing Survey

The above actions ensure that a critical mass of staff across the School, are engaged in the implementation of this standard.

International Students

Homestay Families, Legal Guardians and Korowa Agents

All Korowa Homestay families and Legal Guardians are required to read, understand and comply with our Child Protection Program. The below declaration must be completed prior to Students being placed in Homestay and/or being allocated a Legal Guardian.

The Korowa Enrolments Manager will ensure that declarations are completed and stored appropriately in accordance with our record keeping requirements.

Provider Declaration

(to be used for International Student Homestay, Guardians and Agents)

Korowa Anglican Girls' School is a Child Safe School. We have a zero tolerance stance on child abuse and are committed to the protection of all children from all forms of abuse.

We are clear about our behavioural expectations of every person in our community.

We have developed a Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct that detail our comprehensive approach to protecting children from abuse. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries and ethical behaviour, as well as acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

Please complete the declaration below, and return to Mandy Andrews
Enrolment Manager at admissions@korowa.vic.edu.au

Iof have read and understood:

- the Korowa Anglican Girls' School Child Safety Code of Conduct; and
- the Korowa Anglican Girls' School Child Protection and Safety Policy

and I agree to abide by the requirements in these documents.

I am also aware that I must contact one of the Schools' Child Protection Officers at the School on 9811 0200 if I have any concerns about a student's safety or if I feel a child is in immediate danger I must call the Police on 000.

Signed: Date:.....

*Copies of the Policy and Code are available in hard copy from our Enrolments Manager or on our website www.korowa.vic.edu.au/page/about/child-safe-school



Education
and Training



Responding to suspected child abuse: template for Victorian schools

When to use this template?

School staff should use this template to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. This template should be used in conjunction with the following: Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Completing this template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger, school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

Why record this information?

When completing this template your aim should be to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of Court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

It is a requirement under *Ministerial Order 870- Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of child abuse in schools for schools* to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.

Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse

Please note: if you are making a report to DHHS child protection or Victoria Police you must seek advice before contacting parents/carers so as not to compromise any investigation or place a child at further risk

Staff Member Leading the Response
Name:
Occupation:
Location (School address):
Relationship to child:

Critical Action 1: immediate response to an incident

If anyone is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000. See action 1 of Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Responding to an Emergency
Did the child require first aid? Provide details if 'yes'.
Who administered this? (name and title)
Did the child require further immediate medical assistance?
Current location and safety status: Eg. are all impacted students safe and not in any immediate danger? <i>If a child is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to victoria police on 000</i>

Child's Information

Personal Details	
Name:	Gender:
Year Level/Class:	Date of Birth:
Residential Address:	
Parent/Carer Name/s:	
Parent/Carer Contact:	
Language(s) spoken by child:	
Disabilities, Mental or Physical Health Issues:	

Child's Background

Cultural Status and Religious Background

If the child is of aboriginal or torres strait islander background, government schools must contact their koorie engagement support officer, and catholic schools must contact the diocesan education office to arrange culturally appropriate support. if the child is an international student you must notify the international education division on (03) 9637 2990

Any known previous history of suspected abuse
(prior to this incident, disclosure or suspicion or involvement with agencies):

Family Background

Family composition (if known):

List parenting or care arrangements and sibling names and ages

Any other people living with the child (if known):

Family Background

Disability, mental or physical health issues in family (if known):

Likely reaction to a report being made (if known):

Details of the Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion

Grounds for your belief that a child has been, or is at risk of abuse

Indicators or instances which led you to believe that a child/children are subject to child abuse, or at risk of abuse:

Detail any disclosures or incidents or suspicions (including names, times and dates documenting a child's exact words as far as possible). include specific detail here on what led you to form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused.

Any physical indicators of abuse:

Any behavioural indicators of abuse:

Any patterns of behaviour or prior concerns leading up to an incident, disclosure or suspicion:

Details of persons alleged to have committed the abuse (if known)

Name:

Gender	Date of Birth:
--------	----------------

Relationship to Child:
Nothing if they are within the school or within the family and community (this will impact on who you report to)

Address:

Contact details:

Critical Action 2: Reporting

See Action 2 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

Reporting to Authorities	
Tick the authorities you have reported to:	
<input type="checkbox"/> VICTORIA POLICE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DHHS CHILD PROTECTION	
<input type="checkbox"/> CHILD FIRST	
<input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DECISION NOT TO REPORT	
If you've decided not to report, list your reasons here. Also include any follow-up actions undertaken by you below:	
Provide details of your internal discussions to either of the following: Government school staff must report to security services unit and also to the employee conduct branch if the incident, disclosure or suspicion involves a staff member, contractor or volunteer. Catholic school staff must report to their catholic diocesan education office .	
Date:	Time:
Authority:	
Outcomes from the report:	

Reporting Internally

Provide details of your discussion with School Executive

Time:

Date:

Names:

Discussion outcomes:

Provide details of your internal discussions with a Korowa Child Protection Officer

Time:

Date:

Names:

Discussion outcomes:

Critical Action 3: Contacting Parents/Carers

See Action 3 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

Actions Taken
Provide details of your discussion with parents/carers (if appropriate): School staff must consult with victoria police and/or dhhs child protection to determine if it is appropriate to contact parents, if it is, parents must be contacted as soon as possible (preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).
Have you sought advice from DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES Is it appropriate to contact Parent/Carer <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES List reasons if it is not appropriate to contact Parent/Carer:
If contacting Parent/Carer, provide the following details:
Name of staff member making the call:
Name of Parent/Carer receiving the call::
Discussion outcomes:

Critical Action 4: Providing Ongoing Support

See Action 4 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

Planned Actions
Include detail on what follow-up actions have occurred to support the student (for example, referral to wellbeing professionals and other specialised services, the convening of a student support group and development of support plans):
Follow up actions:
Support:
Referral(s):

Process Of Review

Complete this section between 4-6 weeks after an incident, suspicion or disclosure of abuse in conjunction with your school leadership team. This will support you and your school to continue to protect children in your care and to reflect on your processes and the need for any follow-up action.

Safety and Wellbeing

Current Safety and Wellbeing of the Child

Is the child safe from abuse and harm?

NO

YES

If not consider the need to make a further report

Does the child have any wellbeing issues that are not currently being addressed?

NO

YES

If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a student support plan

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE

Are there any other children who may be impacted by the abuse?

NO

YES

If so have their wellbeing needs been met

NO

YES

If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a student support plan

Current Wellbeing of Impacted Staff Members

Does the staff member who made the report/ witnessed the incident, formed a suspicion or received a disclosure require any support?

NO

YES

If so has this been received?

NO

YES

Review of Actions Taken

Have school staff followed the four critical actions for schools: responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse?

Was an appropriate decision made in relation to when to act?

- NO
 YES

Could the suspected abuse have been detected earlier?

- NO
 YES

Action 1

Did the school take appropriate action in an emergency?

- NO
 YES

Action 2

Was a report made to the appropriate authorities and internally?

- NO
 YES

Were subsequent reports made if necessary?

- NO
 YES

Action 3

Did the school contact the parents/carers asap?

- NO
 YES

Have the parents continued to be engaged if appropriate?

- NO
 YES

Action 4

Has the school provided adequate support for the student?

- NO
 YES

Has a student support plan been established, implemented and reviewed?

- NO
 YES

Has a student support group been established?

- NO
 YES

Was the student appropriately supported in any interviews?

- NO
 YES

Have any complaints been received?

- NO
 YES

Have the complaints been resolved?

- NO
 YES