



Child Information Sharing Scheme

Staff Guidelines

This initiative enables organisations to share confidential information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.

Established by the Victorian Government in 2018, the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) enables organisations to share confidential information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.[\[1\]](#)

From Term 2 2021, the CISS will apply to all Victorian schools and early childhood education and care services.

About the Information Sharing Schemes

The Information Sharing Schemes were introduced in response to Royal Commissions, coronial inquests and independent inquiries over the past decade that identified poor information sharing as a barrier to service collaboration with detrimental outcomes for children and families. The Information Sharing Schemes will enable schools and other prescribed information sharing entities to access and share relevant information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children, and to assess and manage family violence risk.

The Information Sharing Schemes complement and expand upon existing information sharing and child protection laws and do not replace already existing authorisation to share information such as the Child Safe Standards, reporting to Child Protection or Victoria Police, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and other privacy and information sharing laws.

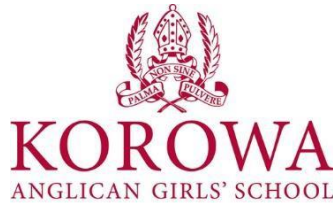
Korowa staff who can request and share information under the Information Sharing Schemes on behalf of the school.

The School Principal and any other staff members authorised by the Principal may request and share information under the schemes.

The following staff have been authorised by the Principal:

- The School Counsellor
- The School Psychologist

Staff authorised by the Principal will be sufficiently competent in the use of the schemes, will have appropriate skills, understanding and experience in the identification and management of student wellbeing or safety, and the appropriate and sensitive management of confidential information. Wherever possible, they will have regular engagement with students and families.



Examples of professionals who cannot share confidential and are not prescribed under the schemes include:

- private psychologists,
- non-staff members of school council
- school administration staff members
- volunteers.

The examples above do not limit who can perform other functions under the schemes (for example, administration or having conversations with children and their family members about information sharing).

Korowa will also ensure that people exercising administrative functions, such as storing and transmitting information, are competent in the appropriate, sensitive and compliant management of confidential information.

Professional learning

It is recommended at least one school leader and two staff members complete available professional learning on the Information Sharing Schemes. These staff will then train and support other authorised school staff to understand and manage information sharing under the schemes.

There is not a requirement for all school staff to undertake professional learning.

The School Principal, Child Protection officers and the School Nurse will undertake professional learning.

Initial point of contact for information sharing requests

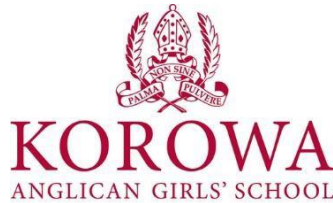
The initial point of contact at Korowa, authorised to respond to information sharing requests made under the schemes is the Principal. The initial request will be triaged and requests sent to authorised staff as appropriate.

Korowa will ensure that staff responsible for answering telephone calls and managing emails to any generic school email address are aware of the initial point of contact for information sharing requests under the schemes.

What information can be shared under the Child Information Sharing Scheme?

Schools can share confidential information which meets all of the **threshold requirements**. 'Confidential information' is defined as:

Health information (e.g. medical reports, test results, medication details, prescriptions and other pharmaceutical purchases, dental records, wishes for potential organ donation and appointment details);[\[2\]](#)



Personal information (e.g. a person's name, signature, address, phone number or date of birth, photographs, and information about a person's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions or associations, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or criminal record).[\[3\]](#)

Threshold requirements

All of the threshold requirements **must be met** before sharing confidential information. These include:

- the purpose of sharing information is to promote the wellbeing and safety of a child;
- the information may assist the organisation to make a decision, assessment or plan, conduct an investigation, provide a service or manage any risk in relation to a child; and
- the information is not 'excluded information' under the CISS.

What information is excluded under the CISS?

Information which is excluded from the CISS (meaning it **cannot** be shared) includes information which, if shared, could reasonably be expected to:

- endanger a person's life;
- cause physical injury to any person;
- prejudice an investigation, a coronial inquest or inquiry, or a criminal or civil trial;
- disclose a document protected by legal privilege;
- disclose the identity of a confidential source of information;
- contravene a court order or any legislative provision; or
- be contrary to the public interest.[\[4\]](#)

Responding to a request for information

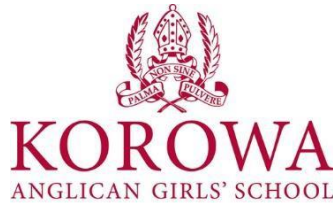
Schools should follow these steps when receiving a request to share information:[\[5\]](#)

Step 1: Check that the organisation seeking the information is an 'Information Sharing Entity' (ISE) referred to in the [ISE List](#). If the organisation is not an ISE, that organisation is not entitled to receive the information requested under the CISS.

Step 2: Assess whether the information meets all of the threshold requirements.

If the information meets the threshold requirements, the school **must** share that information securely (e.g. by using password protection) and within a reasonable time period.

If the information does not meet the threshold requirements, the school must provide a written explanation to the organisation explaining why.



The school may request further information from the organisation about the information which is being sought, to assist the school to determine about whether the threshold requirements have been met.

Step 3: Notify the child and the parents/guardians about the request for information if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so. This should be done each time an information sharing request is received by the school.

Step 4: Consider any views expressed by the child and parents/guardians in relation to the information sharing request.

Step 5: Comply with all applicable reporting obligations which will continue to apply.

Step 6: Keep detailed written records.

Liability of staff members

Staff members who are authorised to share information under the CISS and who act in good faith and with reasonable care when sharing information will:

- not be held liable for any criminal, civil or disciplinary action for sharing information; and
- not be in breach of any code of professional ethics or considered to have departed from any accepted standards of professional conduct.^[6]

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) enables organisations to share information for the purpose of **assessing or managing family violence risk**. If a school suspects that a child is at risk of family violence, the school may be required to share information with other organisations in compliance with both the FVISS and the CISS.

Related Policies

- Child Protection Program Handbook
- Privacy Policy

^[1] *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) s 1(a).

^[2] *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) s 3; *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic) s 3(1).

^[3] *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) s 3; *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic); Department of Health and Human Services, Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines (Guidance for information sharing entities) (September 2018).

^[4] *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) s 41Q.

^[5] *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) s 41W.

^[6] *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2006* (Vic) s 41ZB.