Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

1. Rationale

The College has a broad range of risks associated with its activities and operations, including risks relating to Child Safety. Effectively managing Child Safety risks is a vital element in ensuring that our College is keeping children and young people safe.

While Child Safety risks within the operations of a school can never be completely eliminated, the College actively implements risk management practices to ensure that Child Safety risks are reduced.

Our Child Safe Risk Management Policy and Procedures outline our approach to managing Child Safety risks. This policy aligns with the directions on Child Safety provided by Lutheran Education VIC, NSW, TAS and ACT Ltd (LEVNT) to provide minimum directions, promote consistency, good governance and best practice in our system and College policy.

2. Scope

Standards 2 and 9 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards require the College Board Directors to develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in the College's environments. Clauses 6 and 13 of Ministerial Order 1359 set out particular requirements that must be met when doing so.

This Policy and its Procedures apply to all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors (together referred to as "Staff" and "staff members" for the purposes of this Policy and its Procedures), as well as the College Board Directors.

They apply in all College environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, and on-site and off-site College grounds (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas travel).

3. Policy Principles

Identifying and managing Child Safety risks is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the College community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students through identifying and managing these risks.

In addition to relevant roles the people listed in the below table have particular responsibilities under this Policy and its Procedures.

Everyone employed or volunteering at the College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure safety culture is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The College has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety risk management as follows:

Role	Responsibility
Lutheran Education VIC, NSW & TAS	LEVNT are responsible for providing any applicable Lutheran Education minimum directions on risk management and policy content and principles, support in form of templates and tools to direct efficiency and guide consistent, best practice and compliance policy and procedure. Ensuring for Child Safety risk management: o The LEVNT has a Child Safety risk register in which system wide Child Safety risks and risk controls are recorded. o Reviewing risk ratings for these Child Safety risks, risk movement, new and emerging Child Safety risks and the proposed controls for these risks that require LEVNT action and monitoring. o Receiving escalation of any critical rated Child Safety risk from the School/College, or theme or trend that is emerging or escalating related to high rated Child Safety risk/s.
College Board	The College Board Directors are responsible for: • Reviewing and approving the College's Child Safety risk register including management strategies. • Receiving reporting and assurance on the child safety risk mitigations, emerging or escalating themes or trends • Monitoring the child safe risk management culture within the School/College, including setting risk appetite and tolerances. • Establishing clear lines of responsibility and delegations with regard to Child Safety risk management. • Ensuring that the College communicates its commitment to child safety and to Child Safety legal and regulatory compliance and ensuring that operations are consistent with the commitment to child safety.
Principal	The Principal is responsible for: • Understanding the Child Safety risks relevant to the College, based on the College's operational profile. • Developing, and ensuring the effective implementation of, the College's Child Safety risk management strategies • Implementing the risk strategies to the Principal. • Reviewing and approving any changes to the College's Child Safety risk management strategies. • Promoting a child safe risk management culture within the College. • Establishing clear lines of responsibility and delegations with regard to Child Safety risk management. • Ensuring that the College communicates its commitment to child safety and to Child Safety legal and regulatory compliance and ensuring that operations are consistent with the commitment to child safety. • Ensuring that the College identifies and takes steps to mitigate Child Safety risks, including by: o Ensuring that the College has a Child Safety risk register in which Child Safety risks and risk controls are recorded.

Role	Responsibility
	○ Receiving regular reports regarding Child Safety risk management at the College and the College's Child Safety risk register. ○ Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the College's Child Safety risk controls. ○ Reviewing risk ratings for Child Safety risks, risk movement, new and emerging Child Safety risks and the proposed controls for these risks. ○ Receiving regular reports regarding Child Safety legal and regulatory compliance at the College. ○ Providing reporting to College Board and LEVNT Executive Director to facilitate their monitoring and oversight, including meeting the reporting obligations in this Policy. • Ensuring that appropriate guidance, training and information is provided, at least annually, to: ○ College staff, including College staff and Direct Contact Contractors, about a number of matters, including guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the College's environments.
College Leaders	• The College Leaders are responsible for: • Reviewing, in consultation with the Principal, the College's Child Safety risk management strategies, the Child Safety risk register and the Child Safety Program in accordance with the policies and procedures set out below. • Identifying and reporting to the Principal any instances of non-compliance with Child Safety legal and regulatory requirements and any breakdowns in Child Safety risk controls. • Ensuring that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the College's Child Safety risk management strategies to be effectively implemented within the College. • Supporting the Principal in the practical application of the College's Child Safety risk management strategies, policies, procedures and work systems. • Promoting a child safe risk management culture within the College
College Staff	• All staff are to be familiar with and actively participate in the risk management strategies and procedures of the College.
Child Safety Officers	• Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety. • Liaise with the principal and school leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety. • Lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety • Child Safety Officers are: ○ Principal ○ Deputy Principal/ Head of Campus ○ Assistant Heads ○ School Counsellors

4. **Development of Child Safety Risk Management Strategies**
   The Child Safety risk management strategies set out below have been developed, and are implemented, based on:
   - The nature of all College environments (physical, online and off-campus).
   - The operational profile of the College.
   - The activities that students undertake at the College (including the provision of services by Contractors or outside the College's physical environment).
   - The characteristics and needs of all our students, including age, gender mix, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students with a disability.

5. **Child Safety Risk Management Strategies**
   The College has developed and implemented the following risk management strategies to identify and mitigate our Child Safety risks:

   - **Risk Management Program**: The College has a comprehensive risk management program, that was drafted in accordance with the principles and standards of the International Risk Management Standard AS/ISO 31000, for managing all risks relating to its operations, including Child Safety risks. [Our risk management practices are further outlined in our Risk Management framework].

   - **Risk Assessments**: The College conducts a risk assessment of its environments, activities and characteristics, taking into account the needs of students and applicable control measures (such as systems, policies and procedures), at least annually to ensure that all child safety risks are identified and that there aren't gaps in our Child Safety strategies and systems.

   - **Supervision:** The College ensures there is active supervision for all students and staff working with our students to understand their obligations for duty of care, supervision ratios and active supervision.

   - **Child Safety Incident Register**: The College identifies and records all reasonably foreseeable risks of child safety, abuse and other harm in all College environments, in a Child Safety Risk Register, and assesses these risks with regard to the likelihood of the risk event occurring and the potential consequences if it were to occur. Mitigation strategies and any identified planned improvement plans are documented for risks identified.

   - **Child Safety Risk Register Annual Reviews**: The Child Safety Risk Register is reviewed and approved annually by the College Board Directors and reviewed by the Principal and Leadership Team at least every 6 months. These reviews include:
     - Engaging with staff to input into identification, assessment and mitigation of child safety risks.
     - Reviewing the effectiveness of Child Safety risk control measures and evaluating the overall risk rating for all Child Safety risks.
     - Analysing Child Safety incidents that may indicate a breakdown in risks controls.
     - Analysing any instances of non-compliance with Child Safety legal and regulatory requirements and the systems and procedures that should be put in place to avoid any further non-compliance.
     - Considering the need to implement risk treatments to further control risks.

   - **Child Safety Program**: The College has developed and implements the Child Safety Program, which includes a comprehensive suite of Child Safety policies and procedures.

- **Child Safety Training and Information**: The College provides Child Safety training at induction, and annual refresher Child Safety training, for all College staff. Relevant Volunteers and Contractors also receive Child Safety training and/or information as set out in that Policy. Policy, procedures and enabling systems are implemented to provide for accessibility and awareness of child safety risk management.

- **Child Safety Agenda:** Standing agenda items are on all [staff, leadership and governance] meetings to promote child safety culture and provide opportunity to discuss child safety risk management.
- **Child Safety Officers**: The College has appointed several Child Safety Officers who are promoting child safety culture and awareness at the College.

- **Approvals for Specific Contexts and Activities**: The College has an approvals process and/or ongoing risk management process for certain College contexts and activities (set out in our Risk Management Policy), which require/s that a specific risk assessment and risk management plan be undertaken and provided either to the Principal or their delegate for their review and approval.

- **Reporting**: The College Board Directors and the Leadership Team receive regular reports regarding Child Safety risk management and any instances of non-compliance with our policies and with legal and regulatory requirements, as well as any other information or incidents that may suggest a breakdown in Child Safety systems, procedures and risk controls.

- **Continuous Improvement:** The College and the College Board Directors are committed to a continuous improvement process which involves regular review of the Child Safety program and Child Safety risks to identify areas for improvement.

- **Incident Post Review:** processes are instituted to provide for review of relevant policy, processes and risk mitigations following any child safety incident.

6. **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Good News Lutheran College is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and can actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

At Good News Lutheran College 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 College 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.

The College maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards non-compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to child safety and wellbeing. Any instances of non-compliance are deemed unacceptable and will necessitate immediate corrective action.

Furthermore, the College has no appetite for implementing any new programs or initiatives that:

- May increase the College's Child Safety risks
- May result in a breakdown of the College's existing Child Safety risk controls and their effectiveness.

7. **Reporting Child Safety Risks**

All staff members must be aware of the College's Child Safety risk management practices and must report to the Principal, Head of Campus, Risk Manager and/or Child Safety Officer:

- Any incidents, issues or concerns that may indicate a breakdown in our Child Safety risk controls.
- Any new or perceived, escalating or emerging Child Safety risks.

8. **Risk Assessments for Specific School Contexts & Activities**

The Leadership Team, and any staff members who have or who have been delegated the required level of responsibility, must ensure that Child Safety risks are considered and reviewed when there are changes to the College's operational profile or when new activities, buildings and facilities are planned and operating.

The following College contexts and activities require, as part of their approvals or ongoing child safety risk management processes, that specific risk assessments be undertaken and provided either to the Principal or their delegate [or a relevant management committee for their consideration]:

Physical Environment

Ongoing, periodic reviews must be undertaken of all physical College, to eliminate child safety physical isolation risks such as solid classroom doors or rooms with no windows, and of any procedural controls where elimination is not possible, including random checks of obstructed or out-of-the-way locations.

Online Environment

Regular monitoring, and ongoing periodic reviews must be undertaken of the online College environment and electronic communications, to identify and eliminate online Child Safety risks such as access controls, inappropriate sharing of information/data security, online grooming, and breaches of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and use of ICT policies and procedures.

Trips, Excursions and Camps

The College has developed and implements specific policies and procedures relating to trips, excursions and camps ensuring that Child Safety risks specific to excursions and overnight stays are identified and controls are put in place. [This is outlined in our Trips, Excursions and Camps Risk Management procedures]

For any new, changed or high-risk activity we require additional consultation and review of the risks for this setting with the Principal or their delegate.

Work Experience Placement

The College has developed and implements specific policies and procedures relating to work experience placements, including the completion of the Student Work Experience Checklist that outlines key Child Safety requirements. This complies with the Ministerial Order 382.

Sport and Extra-Curricular Activities

The College has developed and implements specific policies and procedures to manage Child Safety risks specific to the variety of sporting and other extra-curricular activities at the College. This includes for staff (including casual, sports coaches, volunteers and contractors engaged in these activities) the maintaining of professional boundaries, awareness of appropriate demonstration techniques and active supervision both on College grounds and in off-site locations.

9. **College Risk System**
   The College has implemented the record keeping of the capture and monitoring of our risk mitigations and controls in the College risk systems and registers.

10. **The College Child Safety Risk Register**
    Our commitment to keeping children and young people safe cannot be achieved without effectively managing Child Safety risks. As a result, the College has developed a Child Safety Risk Register to actively monitor Child Safety risks and their mitigation.

    The Child Safety Risk Register ensures that the College Board Directors and the Leadership Team have clear visibility and oversight of Child Safety risks in the College, and it enables our College to effectively manage our legal and regulatory Child Safety obligations under Ministerial Order 1359.

    Our Child Safety Risk Register is reviewed annually by the College Board Directors, and at least every six months, as well as following any Child Safety incidents, by the Leadership Team. These reviews involve reviewing the Child Safety risks that are included in the Child Safety Risk Register and the effectiveness of risk controls for each Child Safety risk. Where new Child Safety risks are identified, these are discussed and added to the Child Safety Risk Register and risk controls for the new risks are identified and implemented.

11. **Implementation**
    The Child Safety Risk Management Policy and Procedures is made available to all Staff via the College's policy portal. Training on the Child Safety Risk Management Policy and Procedures is included in induction and annual refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors.

    The Child Safety Risk Management Policy and Procedures is also communicated to Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers, students and the wider College community also in summary in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, which is available on our public website, as well as our staff handbook, parent portal, student handbook.

12. **Policy Compliance**
    Policy Breach
    As policy documents provide direction and protection for the staff, parents and students at the College, it is an important requirement that those that are high and medium risk contain a statement on the implications of a breach.

    All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to appropriate authorities and investigators.

    Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal and their delegate and this may include independent audits and reviews.

13. **Related Legislative Instruments**
    - Ministerial Order 1359

    Source of Obligation: Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in the College leadership, governance and culture. In particular, the College's governance arrangements must facilitate implementation of its child safety and wellbeing policies at all levels.

To implement this Standard, clause 6 of Ministerial Order 1359 requires the College Board Directors to:

- Develop and implement risk management strategies that:
  - Focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the College's environment.
  - Take into account a number of matters specific to the College.
- Record the risks and the actions that the College has taken or will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls and risk treatments).
- As part of its risk management strategy and practices, monitor and review the risks annually, and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

Clause 12 of Ministerial Order 1359 requires the College Board Directors to ensure that, among other things, appropriate guidance, training and information is provided, at least annually, to:

- The individual members of the College Board Directors about:
  - Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse.
  - Child safety and wellbeing risks in the College's environments.
  - The College's child safety policies, procedures and practices.
- College staff about several matters, including, guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the College environment without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

Policy Control & Approval Information

Policy Category	Policy Risk Rating	Approver	Date Approved	Next Review
Child Safety	High	Board	28/08/2023	08/2028

Supporting Documents:

- Child Safety Adult Code of Conduct Child Safety Adult Code of Conduct_July 2023.pdf
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Staff and Student Professional Boundaries_July 2023.pdf
- Volunteer Code of Conduct Volunteer Code of Conduct _ July 2023.pdf
- Child Safety Risk Register Child Safety Risk Register.pdf
- Mandatory Notification Report Form Mandatory Notification & Communication Record

Appendix 1 – Victorian Child Safe Standards

Standard 1

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Standard 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

Standard 3

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Standard 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Standard 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Standard 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Standard 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Standard 10

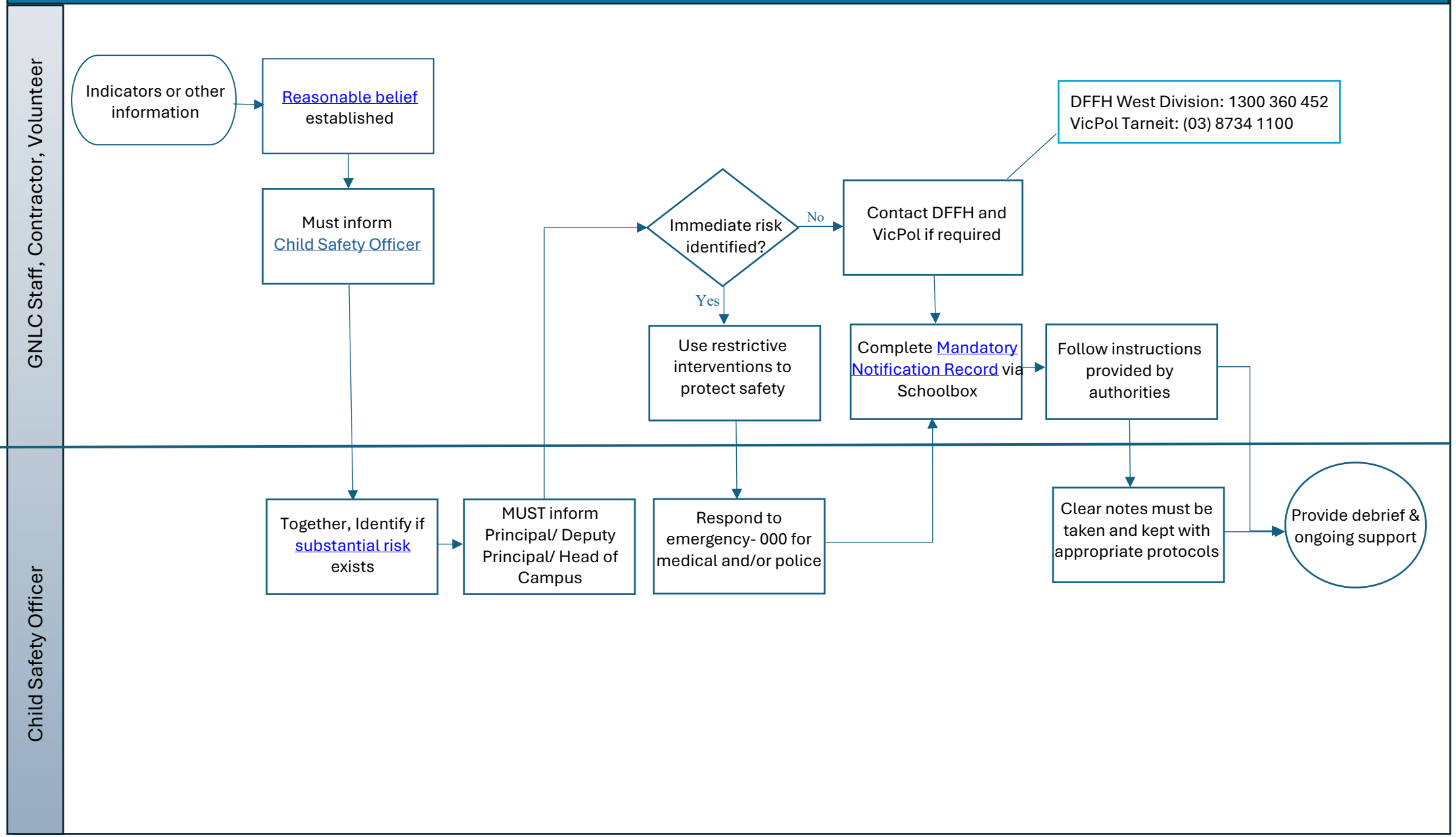
Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Standard 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Mandatory Reporting Process

Appendix 2



1. What can constitute "reasonable belief"?

You have a 'reasonable belief' if a reasonable person in the same circumstances as you would believe that an adult had sexually abused a child, for the same reasons you believed it. For example, you might form a reasonable belief that a child has been sexually abused if:

- The child tells you they have been sexually abused
- The child tells you they know someone who has been sexually abused (which may be a way of talking about themselves)
- Someone who knows the child tells you the child has been sexually abused
- You observe signs of sexual abuse in the child
- You are a qualified professional who observes the child's behaviour or development, which leads you to believe the child has been sexually abused.

You do not need to report rumours or unfounded suspicions. The obligation to report, when reasonable belief exists, lies with all persons covered by this policy.

2. What is a 'substantial risk'?

The offence requires a person in authority to reduce or remove a known 'substantial' risk that an adult associated with the organisation may commit a sexual offence against a relevant child. It does not make it a criminal offence to fail to address every possible risk that a sexual offence may be committed against a child.

There are a number of factors that may assist in determining whether a risk is a substantial risk.

These include:

- The likelihood or probability that the 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.

When determining whether a risk is substantial, the courts will consider a variety of factors, which may include those listed above. The courts will consider all the facts and circumstances of the case objectively and will consider whether a reasonable person would have judged the risk of a sexual offence being committed against the child abuse as substantial. It is not necessary to prove that a sexual offence, such as indecent assault or rape, was committed.

A person in authority in an organisation must take reasonable steps to reduce or remove a known substantial risk that an adult associated with their organisation will commit a sexual offence against a child. For example:

- A current employee who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children in the organisation should be immediately removed from contact with children and reported to appropriate authorities and investigated.
- A community member who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children should not be allowed to volunteer in a role that involves direct contact with children at the organisation.

- 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. If you want to report a child in immediate risk or danger of a sexual offence, please call Triple Zero (000).

3. What indicators are used to identify "substantial risk"?

Allegations may be made about serious forms of harm or behaviours that have a lasting permanent effect, but this does not always need to be the case. It is enough that the alleged conduct is more than trivial to fall within the definition of significant.

Physical indicators include (but are not limited to):

- Unexplained bruises, burns or welts
- Fractured bones, sprains, or dislocation
- Cuts, grazes, or scratches
- Ligature or bite marks
- Bald patches or hair missing in tufts
- Missing or loosened teeth
- Poisoning or medication overdose

Behavioural indicators include (but are not limited to):

- Inconsistent, vague, or unlikely explanations of an injury
- Wariness, fear, or distrust of adults
- Avoidance of physical contact
- Disproportionate reactions or limited emotion displayed when hurt or threatened
- Wearing clothing that is unsuitable for the weather conditions (to hide injuries)
- Unexplained absences and decline in academic performance
- Substance abuse, self-harm, or suicide attempts

Indicators of abuse.docx (live.com)

4. Reasonable excuses for not reporting to Police

You may have a 'reasonable excuse' for not reporting information about child sexual abuse to police if, for example:

- You fear for your safety, or the safety of another person, or
- You believe the information has already been reported to the police.

If you are charged with the failure to disclose offence, a court or jury may consider whether it was reasonable for you not to report to police in the circumstances.

You will not be guilty of an offence if you have a reasonable excuse for not reporting.

4.1. Reasonable excuse – Fear for safety

You have an excuse for not reporting to police if:

- You reasonably fear for your safety or the safety of another person, except the person you believe committed, or was involved in, the sexual offence, and
- Your failure to report is a reasonable response in the circumstances.

This excuse helps to protect children, their families, and others from harm where reporting information might risk people's safety. For example, a mother may decide not to report her partner sexually abusing her child because she fears violence against her or her child.

The fear must be reasonable from the perspective of that person in those circumstances. This recognises that this person is best placed to judge whether their safety, or the safety of another person, is endangered.

4.2. Reasonable excuse – Belief that the information has already been disclosed

You have an excuse for not reporting to police if:

- You believe on reasonable grounds that another person has already disclosed the information to police, and
- You have no further information to add.

For example, you may have this belief if you have disclosed the information in a 'mandatory report' to Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (External link), as Child Protection will provide the information you have reported to them to police.

People who must make mandatory reports are:

- Teachers and school principals
- Doctors, nurses, and midwives
- Out-of-home care workers (excluding volunteer foster carers and kinship carers)
- Early childhood teachers and workers
- Registered psychologists
- Youth justice workers
- School counsellors
- People in religious ministry

This excuse means that people do not need to report the same information to different agencies.

For further information about mandatory reporting obligations, visit the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing website (External link).