



Watsonia Heights  
Primary School

# CHILD SAFETY INDUCTION PACK

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# Child Safety Induction Pack

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- WHPS Volunteer Form and Code of Conduct
- WHPS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- WHPS Child Safety Code of Conduct
- WHPS Volunteers Policy
- WHPS Privacy Policy

The following Policies are available from the school website:

- Visitors Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures



**WATSONIA HEIGHTS  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
*Strive for the Heights*

## WATSONIA HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Volunteer 2024

Thank-you for helping and supporting the students and our school.

We greatly appreciate the healthy relationships that we form within our wonderful community.

Providing our students with the best possible learning environments is enhanced by people like you whom give of their time to maximize the school experience for our students.

As part of our Child Safe practices and to ensure our School Council developed policy is in line with Department of Education and Training regulations we are asking that, before helping out this year, **all volunteers:**

- **Obtain a current and valid Working with Children check card and present this to the office.**
- **Sign acknowledgment of receipt of policies pertaining to the Child Safety Induction Pack.**
- **Sign and agree to the WHPS Code of Conduct – Annually**

Please note that when you come to volunteer at the school you must sign in at the office via Compass, receive your volunteer's lanyard and then sign out via Compass on completion of your volunteering sessions.

All volunteers must have obtained a Working with Children card and this needs to be presented to the office prior to commencing any volunteering in 2024.

We hope that this is not seen as an inconvenience but rather part of the process of ensuring our duty of care is maintained for all our amazing students.

Please fill in the following and return to the office along with your WWC card.

Many thanks again for helping out at our great school.

Michael Kent

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of volunteering that you will be doing:

I agree to sign in and out of the office when volunteering at the school. Yes / No

Signed: ..... Date: .....

I acknowledge that I have received & read the policies pertaining to the Child Safety Induction Pack. Yes / No

Signed: ..... Date: .....

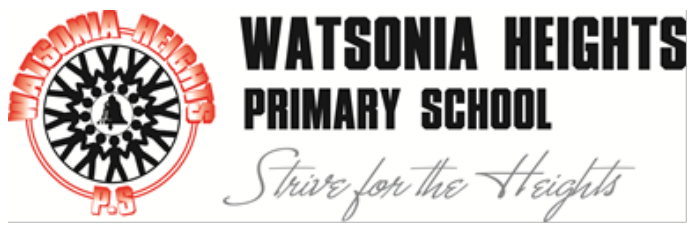
#### OFFICE USE ONLY

WWC Yes / No Expiry: Covid Vaccination Yes / No Copy Sighted/Emailed Yes / No

Staff Member: Date:

Henry Street, Greensborough 3088 P: 9435-4617

E: [watsonia.heights.ps@education.vic.edu.au](mailto:watsonia.heights.ps@education.vic.edu.au) W: [www.watsoniaheightsps.vic.gov.au](http://www.watsoniaheightsps.vic.gov.au)



# WATSONIA HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Volunteer 2024

All staff, volunteers and council members of Watsonia Heights Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. All personnel of Watsonia Heights Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Watsonia Heights Primary School's child safe policy at all times / upholding our statement of commitment to child safety at all times (policy located on WHPS website)
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to Watsonia Heights Primary School's Child Safety Officer, Tony Ryan / leadership, and ensure any allegation are reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to Watsonia Heights Primary School's Child Safety Officer, Tony Ryan / leadership
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.
- Maintaining public privacy and sensitivity around disclosures and any information personal to a child

### Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Use a mobile phone while in a learning environment or when working directly with students. If a call is received, it can be answered away from students and the learning environment.
- Take photographs of students without the explicit permission of their parent/carer.
- By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Watsonia Heights Primary School's Child Safety Officer, Tony Ryan / leadership.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

### I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: ..... Signature: ..... Date: .....

Henry Street, Greensborough 3088 P: 9435-4617

E: [watsonia.heights.ps@education.vic.edu.au](mailto:watsonia.heights.ps@education.vic.edu.au) W: [www.watsoniaheightsps.vic.gov.au](http://www.watsoniaheightsps.vic.gov.au)



# Volunteers Policy 2022



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Watsonia Heights Primary School Office at (03) 9435 4617.

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Watsonia Heights Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

### DEFINITIONS

**Child-connected work: work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.**

*Child-related work:* As defined by the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), child related work is work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

*Closely related family member:* parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

*Volunteer worker:* A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

*School work:* School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

## POLICY

Watsonia Heights Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Watsonia Heights Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that they do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Watsonia Heights Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

### **Becoming a volunteer**

Calls for volunteers may appear in the school newsletter, compass or Facebook page. Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact; the class representative, a member of the Community Links team, a class teacher, the Assistant Principal, the Principal or the school office.

Volunteers are asked to complete an application form at the office and provide a copy of their Working With Children card before starting.

### **COVID-19 vaccination information**

Our school follows Department of Education Training policy with respect to the requirements relating to attendance on school sites and COVID-19 vaccinations. For further information refer to:

[COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers on School Sites](#)

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks**

#### ***Working with students***

Watsonia Heights Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with reading, sports events, camps, excursions, other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Watsonia Heights Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working with Children (WWC) clearance and additional suitability checks such as proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Watsonia Heights Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to an office member to copy for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not
- **Parent/community School Council members** sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our school may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.



***Non child-related work***

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example volunteering out of school hours for gardening, maintenance, working bees, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have Working with Children or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Watsonia Heights Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the school council, we believe that it is important that our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Check. In addition, Watsonia Heights Primary School may ask the council member to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications, proof of identity).

**Training and induction**

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonable likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Induction Pack and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Watsonia Height's Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

**Management and supervision**

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*, our *Child Safety Code of Conduct* and our *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

The principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at Watsonia Heights Primary School.

Privacy and information-sharing

**Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#) and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).**

**Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school staff to:**

- support the student's education, wellbeing and health;
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors;
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.
- 

**Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.**

### **Records management**

**While it is unlikely volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the person in charge of the activity/event, to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).**

### **Compensation**

#### *Personal injury*

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

#### *Property damage*

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

#### *Public liability insurance*

The Department of Education and Training's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in school work is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Associated policies:

- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Visitors Policy*
- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety/Child Safe Policy*
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Department Policies:

- Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination



Watsonia Heights Primary School – Volunteers Policy

- Child Safe Standards
- Privacy and Information Sharing
- Records Management – School Records
- Sexual Harassment
- Volunteers in Schools
- Volunteer OHS Management
- Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors
- Workplace Bullying

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school’s website
- Made available in hard copy from school administration office upon request.

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	School Council Date: 31/10/2022
Approved by	Principal Date: 31/10/2022
Next scheduled review date	July 2025

# Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools

**Is the visitor/volunteer likely to have any contact with children while performing their work duties?**

**YES**      **NO**

**What is the nature of the work/engagement?**

Suitable identification and screening checks, if any, relevant to the role should be undertaken and risks identified.\*\*

**Child-related work**  
 Work that usually involves direct contact (including phone, written and online communication) with a child as part of work duties. (e.g. attendant care, school camps, excursions (including swimming), literacy and numeracy/classroom support, sporting/musical and other extra-curricular assistants and coaches, breakfast/lunch clubs and other student support activities, canteen assistant, Allied health/NDIS therapists, Departmental Staff who are working with children, SRI, Distance education)

**Child connected work**  
 Work duties that only involve occasional direct or indirect contact with children that is incidental to the work. (e.g. fete/fundraising activities, tradespeople, working bee, parents and friends clubs.)

**A Working with Children Check is legally required.**  
 Suitable identification checks relevant to the role should also be undertaken and risk identified\*\*

**The Person is exempt from a Working with Children Check due to higher level of screening for their profession.\***  
 (e.g. teachers, police officers)  
 Suitable identification and screening checks relevant to the role should also be undertaken and risks identified\*\*

**Requiring a Working with Children Check is at the discretion of the school principal.**  
 Other suitability and identification checks, if any, relevant to the role should be undertaken and risks identified\*\*

**NOTE: A Working with Children check is recommended where the visitor/volunteer will regularly be present at the school and/or children can reasonably be expected to be present.**

**NOTE: Parents are legally exempt from the requirement to hold a WWC check when volunteering in an activity in which their child normally participates. In these cases requiring a WWC Check is at the discretion of the school – but it is recommended in most circumstances where the parent is regularly involved in the volunteer activity and working directly with children and/or the nature of the activity poses a higher risk, e.g. overnight camps, swimming, or activities involving close contact, etc.**

\*For further information on who is exempt from requiring a WWC see: [Working with Children Check - Exemptions](#)  
 \*\* For further information on appropriate suitability and identification checks see: [SPAG Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy– 2022



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the Watsonia Heights Primary School Office at (03) 9435 4617.

#### PURPOSE

The Watsonia Heights Primary School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments. It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

#### SCOPE

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

#### DEFINITIONS

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student

## POLICY

### *Statement of commitment to child safety*

Watsonia Heights Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

### *Roles and responsibilities*

#### **School leadership team**

Our school leadership team (comprising the principal, assistant principal, learning specialist and other leadership teachers) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principals and assistant principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing

Watsonia Heights Primary School – Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

### **School staff and volunteers**

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct ([Watsonia Heights PS Website – Policies](#))
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures ([Watsonia Heights PS Website – Policies](#)), including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

### **School council**

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings [**Note** It is not necessary to discuss child safety at every school council meeting, but child safety should be discussed at some meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and school council members are informed and understand the issues]
- undertake annual training on child safety, NOTE: school councils can use the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on [PROTECT](#).
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe (Note: many school councils formally delegate employment powers and duties to the principal. If that is the case in your school you can add the words: "At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy").

### **Specific staff child safety responsibilities**

Watsonia Heights Primary School has nominated Student Wellbeing Coordinator (Tony Ryan, Vice Principal) to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the Student Wellbeing Coordinator are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In addition to these roles, our Student Wellbeing Coordinator is also responsible for:

- Child Safety Officer
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Student Wellbeing Coordinator
- NCCD Collection

Our principal and Student Wellbeing Coordinator are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Student Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Vice Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Student Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Reference Group on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Risk Management Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

### ***Child Safety Code of Conduct***

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct (Found at [Watsonia Heights PS website – Policies](#)) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

### ***Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing***

At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

### ***Establishing a culturally safe environment***

At Watsonia Heights Primary School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:



#### Watsonia Heights Primary School – Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- We begin briefings and meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion.
- We fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school/team newsletters and school assemblies.
- Promote student learning opportunities during First Nation events like NAIDOC week, Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, etc.
- Hold an annual Smoking Ceremony for whole school community.
- Through our library program we learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. We speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- We build schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes through inquiry units and library program.
- We acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families through speeches and presentations.
- We implement the Koorie Education Policy to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities.
- Use Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) to provide advice to government schools about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.
- We express zero tolerance of racism in our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and other documents.
- We address racism of students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly. We make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the culture of WHPS is to prevent incidents from occurring.
- We encourage non-Aboriginal school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families and communities through Professional Development.
- In our library program, we work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
- We have completed Community Understanding Safety Training (CUST) for staff.
- We display and discuss Traditional Owners of the land/s where the school is situated at the Map of Indigenous Australia and learn about the importance of acknowledging Traditional Owners.
- We include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and in curriculum planning for students.
- We have been developing a resource bank of digital, hardcopy print and other artefacts that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.
- We engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups, corporations or the Registered Aboriginal Party to promote cultural safety in school environment, systems and processes.

### ***Student empowerment***

To support child safety and wellbeing at Watsonia Heights Primary School, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct and our school values.

We inform students of their rights through our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, the WHPS Wellbeing Scope and Sequence, The Learning to Learn Inquiry Unit and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at the school office.



When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Other ways Watsonia Heights Primary School empowers our children and students to express their views in order to create an inclusive and supportive environment is through:

- Non-Gender Specific Leadership Positions
- Junior School Council Representatives
- Students voice through Inquiry Units

## Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Watsonia Heights Primary School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- Parent surveys and feedback
- Parent Information and Family Fun Night
- Twice termly team newsletters
- Promote an open door policy for parents and our WHPS community
- Student getting to know you form
- Promotion through our school website and newsletter
- School Council and subcommittees of school council
- Student, staff, and parent meetings/forums
- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at [Watsonia Heights Primary School website](#)
- Newsletters will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school. These are located at the main office and on the display board in the staffroom.

## Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence

- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (Found at: [Watsonia Heights PS website](#)) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

### ***Suitable staff and volunteers***

At Watsonia Heights Primary School, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

#### **Staff recruitment**

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management.](#)

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of working with children
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

#### **Staff induction**

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

#### **Ongoing supervision and management of staff**

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done via regular performance reviews with the Principal.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

### **Suitability of volunteers**

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy (Found at [Watsonia Heights PS Website](#)) which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

### **Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness**

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters. In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

### **School council training and education**

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- 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 our school environment
- Watsonia Heights Primary School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

### **Complaints and reporting processes**

Watsonia Heights Primary School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

- We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found at [Watsonia Heights Primary School website](#)
- If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees and homestay providers) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures ([Watsonia Heights Primary School website](#)).

Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending
- Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy ([Watsonia Heights Primary School website](#))
- and Bullying Prevention Policy ([Watsonia Heights Primary School website](#)) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

### ***Communications***

Watsonia Heights Primary School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT around the school
- updates in our school newsletter
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

### ***Privacy and information sharing***

Watsonia Heights Primary School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

### ***Records management***

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

### ***Review of child safety practices***

At Watsonia Heights Primary School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### ***Related policies and procedures***

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

### **Related Department of Education and Training policies**

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

### **Other related documents**

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

## REVIEW CYCLE

### ***Policy status and review***

Student Wellbeing Coordinator and the Student Wellbeing Working Team is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers, the school council and the school community.

**Approval**

<b>Created date</b>	<b>18/07/2022</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	The policy was consulted with the school council on 31/10/2022
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Michael Kent, Principal
<b>Endorsed on</b>	31/10/2022
<b>Next review date</b>	18/07/2024



## CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY– 2022



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the Watsonia Heights Primary School Office at (03) 9435 4617.

### Purpose

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Watsonia Heights Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

### Acceptable Behaviours

As Watsonia Heights Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding our Watsonia Heights Primary School commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our child safety responding and reporting policy and procedures (found on the [Watsonia Heights PS website](#)) and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#).
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

### Unacceptable behaviours



As Watsonia Heights Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors and member of our school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to ‘grooming’ behaviour (for example, by offering gifts)
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore an adult’s overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy](#) or where required for duty of care purposes
- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

#### Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Watsonia Heights Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education and Training [or other governing authority] Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Watsonia Heights Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal and Tony Ryan, The Student Wellbeing Coordinator (phone: (03) 9435 4617).

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact Tony Ryan, The Student Wellbeing Coordinator (phone: (03) 9435 4617).

#### Approval and Review

<b>Created date</b>	<b>18/07/2022</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	This policy was reviewed by the school council on 31/10/2022
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Michael Kent, Principal.
<b>Endorsed on</b>	31/10/2022
<b>Next review date</b>	18/07/2023

# SCHOOLS' PRIVACY POLICY

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) values your privacy and is committed to protecting information that schools collect.

All staff including contractors, service providers and volunteers of the Department, and all Victorian government schools (**schools**), must comply with Victorian privacy law and this policy.

In Victorian government schools, the management of 'personal information' and 'health information' is governed by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic) (collectively, **Victorian privacy law**). In addition, the Department and Victorian government schools must comply with the *Victorian Data Sharing Act 2017*.

This policy explains how Victorian government schools collect and manage personal and health information, consistent with Victorian privacy law and other associated legislation.

## DEFINITIONS

**Personal information** is recorded information or opinion, whether true or not, about a person whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information. The information or opinion can be recorded in any form. A person's name, address, phone number and date of birth (age) are all examples of personal information.

**Sensitive information** is a type of personal information with stronger legal protections due to the risk of discrimination. It includes information or opinion about an identifiable person's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions or affiliations, religious beliefs or affiliations, philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation or practices, criminal record, or membership of a trade union.

Personal and sensitive information is regulated in Victoria under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic).

**Health information** is information or opinion about an identifiable person's physical, mental or psychological health or disability. Health information is a type of personal information which, because of its sensitivity, also has different and stronger legal protections.

Health information is regulated in Victoria under the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic).

*Note:* De-identified information about individuals can become personal information if it is re-identified or if it is at high risk of being re-identified, for example, if it is released to the public or is a small sample size.

## WHAT INFORMATION DO WE COLLECT?

Schools collect the following types of information.

- Information about students and their families provided by students, their families and others – for example, contact and enrolment details, health information, and parenting and access arrangements.
- Information about job applicants, staff, volunteers and visitors provided by job applicants, staff members, volunteers, visitors and others – for example, qualifications, working with children checks, teacher registration and banking details.
- Information about the activities of students, staff and families if they are on school grounds (for example captured through CCTV) or using school or departmental systems (such as school networks or school-acquired software).

## HOW DO WE COLLECT THIS INFORMATION?

Schools collect information in a number of ways, including:

- in person and over the phone: from students and their families, staff, volunteers, visitors, job applicants and others
- from electronic and paper documentation: such as job applications, emails, invoices, letters, and forms (such as enrolment, excursion, medical, specialist or consent forms)
- through school websites and school-controlled social media
- through online tools: such as apps and other software used by schools
- through any CCTV cameras located at schools
- through photographs, film and other recordings
- through polls, surveys and questionnaires

- and, in some cases, through authorised information sharing arrangements with other services.

### Collection notices

Schools provide families with a privacy collection notice (also known as a collection statement or privacy notice) on enrolment and on an annual basis to communicate:

- the reason for collecting information about families and students
- how the information is used and disclosed
- how to access, update and correct the information.

Schools may also send out ad hoc collection notices during the year, for example if they are adopting new technologies or processes.

### Consent processes

Consent is when someone voluntarily agrees for their information to be collected, used and/or shared within or outside the school or the Department.

Consent, when required, is sought in different ways and can be verbal, online or in writing, depending on the circumstances. There are many consent processes that may be applied during the school year.

Some consents are annual, for example the yearly photography consent process, while some will be for a specific purpose such as to collect information for a school event or use of a new software application.

When seeking consent for photographing students, schools apply the [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students Policy](#).

Health services conducted in schools use specific consent forms, which include consent for use and disclosure of health information. For example, schools use the [Student Support Services consent form](#) to access these services for students.

### Unsolicited information about people

Schools may receive information about you that they have taken no active steps to collect. If permitted or required by law, schools may keep records of this information. If not, they will destroy or de-identify the information when practicable, lawful and reasonable to do so.

## WHY DO WE COLLECT THIS INFORMATION?

### Primary purposes of collecting information about students and their families

Schools collect information about students and their families when necessary to:

- educate students
- support students' social and emotional wellbeing, and health
- fulfil legal requirements, including to:
  - take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to students, staff and visitors (duty of care)
  - make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities (anti-discrimination law)
  - ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of people in school workplaces (occupational health and safety law)
- enable schools to:
  - communicate with parents about students' schooling matters and celebrate the efforts and achievements of students
  - maintain the good order and management of schools
- enable the Department to:
  - ensure the effective management, resourcing and administration of schools
  - fulfil statutory functions and duties
  - plan, fund, monitor, regulate and evaluate the Department's policies, services and functions
  - comply with reporting requirements
  - investigate incidents in schools and/or respond to any legal claims against the Department, including any of its schools.

## Primary purposes of collecting information about others

Schools collect information about staff, volunteers and job applicants:

- to assess applicants' suitability for employment or volunteering
- to administer employment or volunteer placement
- for insurance purposes, including public liability and WorkCover
- to fulfil various legal obligations, including employment and contractual obligations, occupational health and safety law and to investigate incidents
- to respond to legal claims against schools/the Department.

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## WHEN DO WE USE OR DISCLOSE INFORMATION?

Using and/or disclosing information refers to how it is utilised for a specific purpose, and how it is shared and/or made available to other individuals or organisations.

Schools use or disclose information consistent with Victorian privacy law and other associated legislation, including as follows:

- for a **primary purpose** – as defined above
- for a related **secondary purpose** that is reasonably to be expected – for example, to enable the school council to fulfil its objectives, functions and powers
- with **notice and/or consent** – for example, consent provided for the use and disclosure of enrolment details (the information collected will not be disclosed beyond the Department without consent, unless such disclosure is lawful)
- when the Department reasonably believes it is **necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat** to:
  - a person's life, health, safety or welfare
  - the public's health, safety or welfare
- when **required or authorised by law** – including as a result of our anti-discrimination law, occupational health and safety law, child wellbeing and safety law, family violence law,

or reporting obligations to agencies such as the Department of Health and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and complying with tribunal or court orders, subpoenas, summonses or search warrants, and in some circumstances to meet our duty of care

- when required under the **Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes**, with other Victorian schools and Victorian services to promote the wellbeing or safety of children, or to assess or manage family violence risk
- to investigate or report suspected **unlawful activity**, or when reasonably necessary for a specified **law enforcement** purpose, including the prevention or investigation of a criminal offence or seriously improper conduct, by or on behalf of a law enforcement agency
- as de-identified information, for **research or school statistics** purposes, or to inform departmental policy and strategy
- to establish or respond to a **legal claim**.

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## UNIQUE IDENTIFIERS

The Department assigns a unique identifier to every Victorian government school student in its student records system to enable schools to carry out their functions effectively. In addition, the Department uses a unique [Victorian Student Number](#) (VSN) assigned to each student by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) when they enrol in a Victorian government school, independent or Catholic school. The use of the VSN is regulated and can only be used as stipulated by legislation.

The Department also assigns international students a unique international student identifier number.

Other unique identifiers may be applied by schools.

Students undertaking vocational or university education can also register for a Federal Government issued and managed unique identifier, [Unique Student Identifier](#) (USI). The USI is used to create an online record of a student's recognised Australian training and qualifications. Students are required to have a USI before they can receive their qualification or statement of attainment.

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## STUDENT TRANSFERS

### Between Victorian government schools

When a student has been accepted at, and is transferring to, another Victorian government school, the current school transfers information about the student to that school. This may include copies of the student's school records, including any health information. Parental consent is not required for this.

This enables the new school to continue to provide for the education of the student, to support the student's social and emotional wellbeing and health, and to fulfil legal requirements.

### To and from Victorian non-government schools including Catholic schools

When a student has been accepted at, and is transferring to or from a non-government school in Victoria, the current school provides a transfer note from the student records system to the new school, with parental consent.

Additionally, the current school may share information with the new school to promote the wellbeing or safety of the student or to assess or manage family violence risk pursuant to the Information Sharing Schemes.

### To and from interstate schools

When a student has been accepted at and is transferring to or from a school outside Victoria, the current school provides a transfer note to the new school, with parental consent.

Further direction on information transfers between schools is available in the guidance under [Enrolment – Student transfers between schools](#).

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## NAPLAN RESULTS

NAPLAN is the national assessment for students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, in reading, writing, language and numeracy.

Schools use NAPLAN data to evaluate their educational programs by analysing results for students who attended their school.

Victorian government schools can access student NAPLAN results from the student records system. When a student transfers to or from an independent, Catholic or interstate school, with parental consent, the school where the assessment was undertaken can provide a student's NAPLAN results to the new school.

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## RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

On occasion, Victorian government schools and the Department's central and regional offices receive complaints from parents and others. Schools and/or the Department's central or regional offices will use and disclose information as considered appropriate to respond to these complaints (including responding to complaints made to external organisations or agencies). More information about the process can be found in the [Complaints – Parents policy](#).

Complaints relating to the Department's International Student Program are managed according to the [ISP Complaints and Appeals Policy](#).

Complaints specifically about the Department's or a school's handling of personal information are managed according to the [privacy complaints process](#).

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## ACCESSING INFORMATION

All individuals, or their authorised representative(s), have a right to access, update and correct information that a school holds about them, providing access to information or records doesn't increase a risk to the safety of a child or children.

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## ACCESS TO STUDENT INFORMATION

Schools only provide school reports and ordinary school communications to students, parents, carers or others who have a legal right to that information. Requests for access to other student information or by others must be made by lodging a [Freedom of Information](#) (FOI) application through the Department's Freedom of Information Unit.

In some circumstances, an authorised representative may not be entitled to information about the student. These circumstances include when granting access would not be in the student's best interests or would breach our duty of care to the student, would be contrary to a mature minor student's wishes or would unreasonably impact on the privacy of another person.

Additionally, the Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes allow prescribed organisations to share confidential information with each other to promote the wellbeing or safety of children, or to assess or manage family violence risk. Victorian schools and a range of other Victorian services fall under these schemes. For more information, refer to: [Information sharing and MARAM reforms](#)



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## ACCESS TO STAFF INFORMATION

School staff may first seek access to their personnel file by contacting the principal. Guidance on access to staff health information is available at: [Access to health information – Employees](#). If direct access is not granted, the staff member may request access through the Department's Freedom of Information Unit. Refer to [Freedom of information requests](#) for further information.

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## STORING AND SECURING INFORMATION

Victorian government schools take reasonable steps to protect information from misuse and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification and disclosure. They store all paper and electronic records securely, consistent with the Department's records management policy and information security standards. All school records are formally disposed of, or transferred to the State Archives (Public Record Office Victoria), as required by the relevant Public Record Office Victoria record Retention and Disposal Authorities. Refer to the [Records Management policy for Schools](#) for further information.

Victorian government schools are provided with tools and information to help them assess software and contracted service providers for privacy and information handling risk. Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) help schools to assess third party software used in a school that handles personal, sensitive or health information. Conducting PIAs helps schools to identify privacy and security risks, evaluate compliance with Victorian privacy laws and document actions required to manage any identified risks.

The European Union's (EU's) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies to international students from the EU. For queries, contact [international@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:international@education.vic.gov.au)

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## UPDATING YOUR INFORMATION

It is important that the information we hold about students, families and staff is accurate, complete and up to date. Please contact your school's general office when information you have provided to them has changed.

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## FOI AND PRIVACY

To make a FOI application contact:

### Freedom of Information Unit

Department of Education and Training  
2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne VIC 3002  
(03) 7022 0078

[foi@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi@education.vic.gov.au)

For more information about FOI, see <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/working/Pages/foi.aspx>.

If you have a query or complaint about privacy, please contact:

### Knowledge, Privacy and Records Branch

Department of Education and Training  
2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne VIC 3002  
(03) 8688 7967

[privacy@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@education.vic.gov.au)