



STATEMENT of COMMITMENT

to

CHILD SAFETY

The dignity of the human person is fundamental to Steiner Education. Children's development is dependent on the quality of care provided by the significant adults in their lives. Safety, a basic human right, is a pre-requisite for the kindergarten and school to be able to carry out its mission to educate.

All children have a right to feel and be safe.

As an educational institution, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to incidents involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. We must act to protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout our school and kindergarten so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is supported by proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.

A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. We need a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness; a culture of zero tolerance of child abuse. Children and adults should know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. Allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are to be treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements of reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility: parents, all kindergarten and school staff, communities, governments and business all have a role to play. When a staff member forms a belief that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, they must take action that is timely, respectful and coordinated. For some staff members this is mandatory. This policy provides staff with a consistent set of procedures to follow when making a notification of suspected abuse. The intent of the policy is to clarify the actions to be taken in relation to maintaining the highest duty of care to our children.

Schools must comply with the legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the Children, Youth and Families Act (2005), the Crimes Act, (1958) and Ministerial Order 1359, (replacing Ministerial Order 870 as of July 1, 2022) and the Child Safe Standards, following on from the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust Report. The focus of the child safe standards is helping organisations to drive cultural change so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

The child safe standards will promote cultures where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice in organisations.

- Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture.
- Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- Families and communities are informed and involved.
- Equity is promoted and diversity respected.
- People working with children are suitable and supported.
- Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused.
- Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
- Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
- Implementation of child safe standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
- Policies and procedures document how the school and kindergarten is child safe.

The standards are informed by three key principles that provide overarching guidance for organisations in implementing the standards:

- Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children.
- Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety of children with a disability.

As an educational institution, we have a legal and moral responsibility to provide a culturally safe, nurturing and positive environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued. The term 'Aboriginal' includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important to be respectful of how individual children, students, their families and community refer to themselves and use appropriate language. We commit that within our school and kindergarten:

- a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported. Students feel comfortable being themselves and expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems
- staff, students, volunteers, and the school community are equipped to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students. Students are supported by carers who respect their Aboriginality and encourage their sense of self and identity.
- measures are in place to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences. Racism is abuse.
- there is active support for the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, students and their families.

Ballarat Steiner School and kindergarten is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Standard One: Upholding the safety and wellbeing of children in our care

Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements. Working with children can be very rewarding and it brings additional responsibilities.

We must act to protect children from abuse in our organisation, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.

A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. We foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

Leadership will take preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our organisation is a paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety in our organisation. Our management team need to take the lead in protecting children from abuse and must be made aware of child abuse allegations and risks and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

We must ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

Evidence of Standard One: Governance Charter, Code of Conduct in relation to Child Safe Standards, Enrolment Policy, Fees Policy, Employment Policy and CRT Induction Policy

Standard Two: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

Our organisation has developed a child safe policy which outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

Promote inclusion

Our organisation is inclusive to all children and families. In particular, we strive to establish a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children.
- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- the safety of children with a disability.

Evidence of Standard Two: Child Safe Policy, Enrolment Policy

Standard Three: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Ballarat Steiner School has a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. In our Behaviour Management policy, there are also specific behavioural expectations outlined to encourage appropriate interactions between children.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

Evidence of Standard Three: Code of Conduct in relation to Child Safe Standards, Employment Policy and CRT Induction Policy, Behaviour Management Policy.

Standard Four: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Ballarat Steiner School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager.

Ballarat Steiner School ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. All College Members need to understand their responsibilities and the Child Safety Officer must also understand his/her responsibilities. A child safety officer is the person in our organisation who has knowledge of child safety issues and is the point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

Evidence of Standard Four: Code of Conduct in relation to Child Safe Standards, Employment Policy and CRT Induction Policy

Standard Five: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Evidence of Standard Five: Child Protection and Reporting Obligations Policy

Standard Six: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse

We have adopted an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our organisation identifies, assess, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

Evidence of Standard Six: Child Safe Policy which includes Risk Management Strategies and a risk matrix.

Standard Seven: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Ballarat Steiner School, in partnership with families, will ensure students are engaged and are active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their safety.



We will ensure that views of staff and students are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Students are empowered with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

Evidence of Standard Seven: Child Safe Policy and Behaviour Management Policy.