

child safety concern/complaint policy

policy objectives

Ballarat Clarendon College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students in its care (including boarding and international students) and has zero tolerance for any form of abuse of conduct that might cause harm to children and young people. Any concern or complaint relating to the wellbeing of children is taken seriously and responded to promptly to ensure that risks are removed and that Clarendon upholds its legal, moral and ethical obligations.

The safety and wellbeing of students is dependent on all members of the community (students, parents, teachers, Clarendon staff and the general public) being vigilant in their assessment of situations which may have caused harm to children or have the potential to cause harm and relies on easily accessible mechanisms where these observations can be reported. To this end, Clarendon has created transparent and easily accessed mechanisms through which any concern relating to Child Safety can be raised and which lead into our broader Child Safety Framework and Child Safety Reporting Policy and Procedure.

All complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

nature of concern/complaint

Anything that suggests a risk for a young person can be flagged as a concern/complaint. It can relate to something that has occurred or that a member of the community believes could occur without appropriate action. It might relate to disclosures that have been made by a young person, observed behaviour or information being surfaced in other settings.

Concerns/complaints might include, but are not exclusive to, sexual abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, neglect, psychological harm, grooming behaviour, failure to report or failure to protect. A concern/complaint should be raised at any time any member of the community has formed a reasonable belief that a risk exists for children.

Paid staff (including the Boarding House) and volunteers should be aware of and meet their obligations as outlined in Clarendon's Child Safety Reporting Policy and Procedure. It is the responsibility of the person who is in receipt of the information to make the report; this responsibility cannot be discharged to others in the organisation. All Clarendon staff, both in the day school and in the boarding and residential programs, have a responsibility to act on any child safety concern immediately, to take all complaints seriously and to manage the situation thoroughly using the processes outlined within Clarendon's Child Safety policies and procedures (see below).

notifying of a child safety concern/complaint

Any person (students, parents, teachers, Clarendon staff and the general public) can notify of a Child Safety concern/complaint through any of the following mechanisms.

Concerns/complaints can be raised with any senior member of staff (Heads of School, Heads of Department, Wellbeing staff, People and Culture staff, etc.). These concerns will be processed, assessed, addressed and recorded through the mechanism outlined below. Concerns can be raised by students to any member of staff and student leaders are appropriate conduits for concerns to be raised in key areas of Clarendon as Child Safety is an agenda item at all student leadership meetings.

The Clarendon website (accessible to anyone) and the internal Hub (accessible to staff, parents and students) in different forms all contain a 'Child Safety Concern/Complaint' icon. Clicking on this icon allows a person to flag any complaint or concern that relates to Child Safety. This complaint is initially forwarded to both Clarendon's Chief Child Safety Officer and the Principal for initial processing. The notification goes to two key staff to ensure that no single person is ever responsible for assessing a concern and to allow appropriate action if there is a conflict of interest relating to one of the two staff initially identified.

process post receipt of a concern/complaint

The concern/complaint will initially be assessed on the following criteria:

- What are the risks, their severity and how they need to be mitigated? Priority should be the removal of immediate risk.
- Who is directly impacted, implicated or a stakeholder in the context of the concern?
- Are there legal responsibilities that need to be enacted?
- Are there internal processes that need to be enacted?

- What further information needs to be gathered?
- Who is most appropriate to lead the process based on the above?

Key staff responsible for acting and reporting on concerns/complaints (including child abuse) and ensuring that they are acted on to immediately to remove risk and ensure that all Child Safety policies and procedures are followed with fidelity.

- Ballarat Clarendon College Board of Management
- Principal
- Head of Student Wellbeing/Chief Child Safety Officer
- Risk and Compliance Manager
- Chief Operating Officer
- Heads of Junior, Middle and Senior School
- Heads of Boarding
- Head of Yuulong Campus

The Principal and Risk and Compliance Manager are responsible for the monitoring of the overall compliance of Clarendon's services with the concern/complaints procedure.

In circumstances where the complaint relates to one of the abovementioned positions or that person is unable to enact their responsibilities, the Principal will delegate the responsibility to an appropriate staff member. Where a concern relates to the Principal, the responsibility will be delegated by the Board.

Young people who are the subject of a Child Safety complaint and people raising concerns have specific wellbeing needs and Clarendon will ensure that appropriate support is provided both during the process of investigation of any complaint and as required after any complaint being made to ensure the wellbeing of parties involved. This will involve support for students and staff through Clarendon's wellbeing service.

Staff that have been required to enact Child Safety policies and procedures have specific wellbeing needs. They will be supported by Clarendon's wellbeing staff, can access Clarendon's Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and receive support from colleagues who have received training in relation to supporting a staff member who has raised a Child Safety concern.

Support for students will be provided through Clarendon's wellbeing team in conjunction with key pastoral care staff (Heads of School, Heads of Year, House Teacher, Head of Boarding and Boarding Tutors).

The actions taken will vary based on the nature of the concern/complaint raised and may include, though not exclusive to:

- Enacting Child Safety Reporting Policy and Procedure
- Informing appropriate authorities (Victoria Police, Commission for Children and Young People, Victorian Institute of Teaching, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing)
- Enacting Respectful Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Enacting staff discipline proceedings
- Risk Assessment and review of school activities or practice

Where an assessment or risk demands it, this may include the standing down of staff or the suspension of students pending further investigation. This would be based on taking action which prioritises the wellbeing of a child and reduction of risk as a priority.

Clarendon will work and collaborate with all relevant authorities and take direction as required. All necessary actions will be taken to protect any child or student connected to the complaint or concern relating to child abuse until the concern/complaint is resolved.

information sharing

Ballarat Clarendon College is an authorised organisation under the Information Sharing Schemes.

The Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (the Information Sharing Schemes) provide authorised organisations, including Victorian schools, with an expanded ability to share confidential information with other authorised services to promote the wellbeing or safety of children or to assess or manage family violence risk.

Under the Information Sharing Schemes, organisations that are prescribed as Information Sharing Entities (ISEs):

- must acknowledge they have received a request for information
- must respond to requests for information and provide all relevant information to other ISEs that meet the requirements of the scheme it was requested under and do so in a timely manner
- must consider the information sharing legislative principles for the schemes

- must advise the requesting ISE in writing if declining to share all or part of a request for information
- can request information from other ISEs
- can proactively share information with other ISEs
- must meet the record keeping requirements of the Information Sharing Schemes.

All Clarendon staff are subject to the Information Sharing Schemes. If there is a concern in relation to an information sharing request, this should be communicated with the Principal or the Chief Child Safety Officer immediately.

compliance

The Clarendon Board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that Clarendon is compliant with its legislative obligations under Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal and Risk and Compliance Manager are responsible operationally for ensuring that the policies and procedures that relate the Child Safe standards are adhered to.

Responsibility for ensuring compliance of this policy and other policies that relate to child safety (see below) resides with the Principal, the Chief Child Safety Officer and the Risk and Compliance Manager. These staff meet as a group on a monthly basis to ensure this occurs.

Compliance with all aspects of Clarendon’s Child Safety framework is a key focus of performance appraisals for staff with positions of responsibility.

record keeping

Record keeping relating to Child Safety matters outlined in the Child Safety Record Keping Policy.

Child safety concerns/complaints identified either electronically or personally will be recorded through one or a combination of the following mechanisms:

- Complaints register if a general complaint.
- Child Safety concern tab on Hub if complaint relates to a specific student.
- Staff employment file if the complaint relates directly to a staff member.

Related Documents

Child Safety Framework Policy
 Child Safety Reporting Policy
 Child Safety Reporting Procedure
 Clarendon Code of Conduct Procedure
 Respectful Behaviour Policy
 One-on-one Situation Procedure
 Child Safety Record Keeping Policy



Owner: Head of Student Wellbeing	Approved: Principal	Child Safety Concerns/ Complaints Policy
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