



Malvern

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

De La Salle College is committed to child safety.

We recognise the importance of student empowerment and participation, and strive to develop the potential of those entrusted to our care. We challenge, nurture and respect all children/young people, as well as our staff, contractors and volunteers.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

De La Salle College is committed to:

- being open and transparent with our community about issues relating to child safety matters;
- preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks;
- maintaining robust recruitment practices for all staff, contractors and volunteers;
- regularly training and educating our staff, contractors and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our staff, contractors and volunteers to achieve these commitments. All these measures are periodically reviewed and ensure the ongoing safety of all children/young people in our care, enabling them to learn and grow in a safe environment.

We will ensure that families and children/young people have the opportunity to contribute, in an authentic way, to decisions related to child safety.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children/young people;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children/young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- ensure that children/young people with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

All of our staff, contractors and volunteers must agree to abide by our Child Safety staff Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children/young people. All staff, contractors and volunteers, as well as children/young people and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff, contractors and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children/young people) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff, contractors and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff, contractors and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand De La Salle's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children/young people from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children/young people is safe and appropriate (please refer to De La Salle's Child Safety Staff Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. De La Salle understands that when recruiting staff, contractors and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children/young people and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children/young people, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police;

- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so;
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children/young people when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children/young people.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child on social media).

Regular Review

This commitment statement will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

De La Salle College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff, contractors and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children/young people, families, staff, contractors and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child/young person states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves);
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed;
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it;
- observing suspicious behaviour.