

# STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY



Ballarat High School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Ballarat High School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Ballarat High School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Ballarat High School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Ballarat High School will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

# CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY



**PURPOSE:** The child safe environments policy sets out Ballarat High School's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with young people. The policy will apply across all school related events and locations, including online environments.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES:**

Policies and procedures outlining Ballarat High School's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below.

## **A CHILD SAFE CULTURE:**

Ballarat High School's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. Ballarat High School's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found on the school website at <http://www.ballaraths.vic.edu.au/school/publications>

## **PERSONNEL:**

School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. Ballarat High School's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The Code of Conduct can be found on the school website at <http://www.ballaraths.vic.edu.au/school/publications>

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:**

Ballarat High School applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check. All teachers are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teachers which involves completion of a National Criminal History Records check.

## **REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT**

Ballarat High School has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns and the reasons for those concerns to a member of the Student Services Team. The school will take action to respond to a concern or complaint.

Ballarat High School's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the school website at <http://www.ballaraths.vic.edu.au/school/publications>

## **RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT**

Ballarat High School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

## LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Ballarat High School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

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

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Ballarat High School collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information are included in the School Privacy Policy.

## POLICY EVALUATION AND REVIEW

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

## DEFINITIONS

**Child abuse** includes—

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence or
  - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
  - serious neglect of a child.

**Child-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

**School staff** being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

## APPROVAL:

This policy was approved by School Council on the 14th September, 2016

## EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

