

Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

AL SIRAAT COLLEGE INC

Association No. A0051356N
ABN 96 957 841 991

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AL SIRAAT
COLLEGE

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: **“All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care”** (Al-Bukhari in his Sahih, Kitab Al-Jum’ah, Hadith 893).

The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said: **“Allah will (on the Day of Reckoning) question each person in a position of responsibility about what he (she) was responsible for (in this life)”** (Jami al-Tirmidhi No.1705).

The concept of child safety cannot be fulfilled unless we confront all forms of abuse that may deny a child their basic right of protection.

Al Siraat College has developed this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy as an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse. It forms the foundation of the College’s procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the College’s culture with respect to child safety.

The College’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy has been approved and endorsed by the College’s Committee and is reviewed at least every two years or after any significant child safety incident, by the Committee.

The College Committee will consider the following when reviewing the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy:

- The college community consultation outcomes
- Relevant child safety complaints, concerns or incidents to identify causes and systematic failures to inform continuous improvement
- Report on the outcomes of the review to the College community via the Principal or delegate

NOTE: College community consists of staff, volunteers, students, parents and families

OBJECTIVES

This Policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College
- the creation of a positive and robust child safe culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College
- compliance with all laws, regulations, and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children and young people who come to Al Siraat College have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. This includes students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students’ best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the College community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually, and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do, and every decision that they make.

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE

Children and young people have the right to be safe from all forms of abuse, neglect and harm. Child abuse may occur within a family, within an organisation or community, or online, and may be perpetrated by adults or other children or young people.

As members of the College community, staff, volunteers and contractors may be the first or only people in a position to recognise concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. It is therefore essential that all members of the College community understand the different forms of child abuse and respond appropriately to any concerns.

For the purposes of this Policy, child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- **Physical abuse** – the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that causes or is likely to cause harm.
- **Sexual abuse** – when a child is involved in sexual activity that they do not fully understand, cannot consent to, or are not developmentally able to understand.
- **Grooming** – deliberate behaviours used to establish trust with a child, their family or carers in order to facilitate sexual abuse or exploitation.
- **Child sexual exploitation** – where a child is manipulated, coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, accommodation, affection, status or other benefits.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse** – persistent behaviours that damage a child's emotional wellbeing, self-esteem or development.
- **Neglect** – the persistent failure to provide a child with basic physical, emotional, educational or medical needs, resulting in actual or likely harm.
- **Family violence** – behaviour by a family member that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening, coercive or controlling, including exposing a child to such behaviour.

Children may also experience harm through criminal conduct, including:

- **Forced marriage** - Forced marriage is an offence on its own and does not need to rely on slavery or human trafficking laws. A young person under the age of 16 is not able to consent due to their age.
- **Change or suppression (conversion) practices** - The [Change or Suppression \(Conversion\) Practices Prohibition Act 2021](#) bans change or suppression practices and provides a range of options for preventing and responding to them.
- **Exposure to violent extremism** - Violent extremism refers to a person or group who is willing to use violence, or advocates the use of violence by others, to achieve a political, ideological or religious goal.

Multiple forms of abuse may occur at the same time, and recognising one form of abuse does not exclude the possibility that other forms are also present.

CHILD SAFE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.

4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, Direct Contact Volunteers**, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all Committee members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Children and other children who are vulnerable (such as children in out-of-home care) have the right to special care and support.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

***Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance, and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.*

The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) defines "direct contact" as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- *physical contact;*
- *face to face contact;*
- *contact by post or other written communication;*
- *contact by telephone or other oral communication; or*
- *contact by email or other electronic communication.*

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in College camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING PROGRAM

Al Siraat College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

clear information about the recognised forms of child abuse, associated risk indicators and the College's reporting obligations

- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening Committee members, staff, Direct Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers
- procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities
- a child protection training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Al Siraat College's induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program.

Ongoing child protection training is provided at least annually.

Staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers are supported and supervised by the College's Child Protection Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child protection.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Al Siraat College, the Committee and staff, as well as Volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

COMMITTEE

Each member of the Committee is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Program to be effectively implemented within the College and are responsible for holding the Principal and the Executive Team accountable for effective implementation.

THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the College.

THE COLLEGE'S CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS

A number of staff members have been nominated as the College's Child Protection Officers. Our Child Protection Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

STAFF MEMBERS

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Protection Officers.

DIRECT CONTACT VOLUNTEERS

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program, particularly this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Protection Officers.

INDIRECT CONTACT VOLUNTEERS

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with College administrative functions.

THIRD PARTY CONTRACTORS

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and College cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.
The College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the Third Party Contractor.

EXTERNAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College.
The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.

Al Siraat College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE CONCERNS

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program provides detailed guidance for the Committee, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College's nominated Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Volunteers, students, parents/carers and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the College's Senior Child Protection Officer, Ms Leah Hamel, by phoning 03 9407 7000 or emailing lhanel@alsiraat.vic.edu.au.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

POLICY AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Al Siraat College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards. Reviews of the child safety and wellbeing policies and practices may be prompted by:

- a concern expressed by a student, family member, staff member, volunteer or community member
- a complaint or confirmed incident of child harm
- a legislative or regulatory change
- new issues or new activities proposed, such as new technologies or building changes
- discovery that staff or volunteers are not aware of child safety policies, or not implementing child safety policies as intended
- every two years as a minimum

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Author	Version	Change Reference
2019	Esra Boz	3.0	Reviewed after audit
2020	Leah Hamel	4.0	Updated relevant positions
Nov-23	Leah Hamel	5.0	Updated after review and legislative changes
Dec-24	Leah Hamel	6.0	Reviewed and updated after audit
Jun-26	Leah Hamel	7.0	Reviewed and updated to reflect all types of abuse including 3 added types of abuse re new PROTECT update

APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF THIS POLICY

Approved and adopted by the College Committee on the 26th of August 2026.