



WELLINGTON SECONDARY COLLEGE VISION, MOTTO, SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT AND COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY “THE WELLINGTON WAY”

Our Vision

“Wellington Secondary College is committed to every student achieving their potential by:

- ***Providing stimulating, supportive and safe learning environments in and out of school hours in all school activities by employing sound educational theory and practice.***
- ***Encouraging positive relationships based on tolerance and respect for individual differences and needs.***
- ***Empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning and safety and to develop as resilient life-long learners and good citizens.”***

Our school’s vision is to prepare young people to become active, engaged and responsible citizens of the local and global community. It aims to prepare students to contend with a very dynamic 21st century in which creativity, cooperative work, connectedness to the world and adaptability are key features. The school aspires to provide a contemporary approach to teaching and learning in its purposeful learning environment.

The school values achievement, excellence, learning, caring, curiosity, respect and responsibility, perseverance, integrity, inclusiveness, respect for diversity, honesty and equity. Sitting at the centre of its work, the school believes in high expectations in all students and a commitment to hard work.

The school encourages the participation of our students in developing and maintaining safe learning environments.

Wellington Secondary College has a zero tolerance to bullying and child abuse.

The programs of, and teaching in, the school will support and promote the principles and practices of Australian democracy including a commitment to:

- An elected government.
- The rule of law.
- Equal rights for all before the law.
- Freedom of religion.
- Freedom of speech and association.
- The values of openness and tolerance.

Statements which affirm the school's principles are found in the vision of the school on the website, in the student diary and in documents such as the prospectus and handbooks for students, parents and staff.

In all documents, in all practice by students and teachers, in work with the School Council and the community, in all teaching and learning programs, in all school initiatives, in all internal and external interactions, in all organisational structures and practices the Wellington Way vision of the school will sit at the centre and there will be expectations about all work aligning with the school vision.

The College Philosophy is reflected in our motto:

'Caring, Striving, Learning'

This is the "Wellington Way" and as espoused through our vision and motto, underpins everything we do:



The College Motto

'Caring' (for others)

Tolerance for others, helpfulness and co-operation are valuable qualities for all students

'Striving' (for success)

Goal setting, hard work and commitment are important requirements for personal success

'Learning' (for life)

Education is a lifelong process and a right that should not be hindered by inappropriate behaviour

The College Crest

The crest was updated in 2001 and is now stylised

'Circle'

Symbolises the nature of education that is all encompassing and never ending.

The clasped circle represents the concept of caring, respect and working together

'Tree'

Illustrates the history of the Mulgrave District that was originally cultivated as fruit orchards

'Birds of Flight'

Depicts striving for success as well as portraying the 'Vanellus' (Spur Wing Plover)

'Book'

Is the traditional symbol for learning and knowledge

Our Mission

All students at the College will have access to appropriate teaching programs supported by learning technology resources, which prepare them for further education and the workforce. These programs will include academic studies, the arts, sport and physical education, and personal and social development.

The College recognises that quality teaching is the key to learning.

The College provides a safe, supportive, caring and pleasant environment to promote positive student, teacher, parent and community relationships and to engender a positive and inclusive attitude to learning.

Extra-curricular activities that supplement and extend each student's interests, skills and personal development are supported.

Programs are designed to provide the opportunity for all students to:

- Prepare for active participation in society
- Enjoy schooling and develop a love of learning
- Develop the ability to work with others
- Foster adaptability to change

In September 2016, Wellington Secondary College formally adopted a commitment to Child

Safety within the following parameters.

Our commitment to child safety

Our organisation is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

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.

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

This Policy was endorsed/approved by the Wellington Secondary School Council on September 6, 2016 for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2018.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, and to providing a safe environment for children of all abilities.

We provide an inclusive environment and support gender equity. We respect the rights of all students who identify as LGBTIQ.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

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
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children who identify as LGBTIQ
- promote inclusion for all children with diverse needs or abilities and promote safety and equitable participation for all.

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children 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 and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff 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 with diverse learning needs and/or disabilities.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please

refer to this organisation's 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. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We support applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website (www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) for further information.

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 form¹, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children 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, 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.

¹

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.²
- **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.³
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.⁴

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children 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.

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 that are outside the College Digital Safety guidelines.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. We work to ensure all children, families, staff 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.

² A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

³ Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

⁴ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child 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 observed⁵
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Date Implemented	WSC Format June 11, 2014, Child Safe September 6, 2016
Authors	BL, CM, BE, BD, OB, DK, BN, VRQA Templates
Approved By	Policy Sub Committee, College Council (August/September 2016)
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	 Merih Acar – Council President Date: 6.9.2016
Date Reviewed	Reviewed June-September 2016 – Safe Schools additions
Responsible for Review	Principal
Review Date	September 2018
References	

⁵ For example behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>