

Child Safe Policy

Box Hill Senior Secondary College is committed to the safety of children and young people. We are committed to working together to ensure that all young people are safe, happy, empowered and engaged in their education.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistently; in line with DET policies and procedures. All staff at Box Hill Senior have a legal and moral obligation to follow these processes and procedures when we have concerns about the safety of a young person.

Box Hill Senior Secondary College is committed to preventing the abuse of young people and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. Staff are provided with regular training and our recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers align with child safe guidelines and standards.

We support and respect all young people, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Indigenous young people, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for young people with a disability. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Our students

This policy is intended to empower students at Box Hill Senior and ensure that they are vital and active participants in their education. 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 and inclusiveness through our school values of Respect, Organisation, Responsibility and Personal Achievement.

Our Box Hill Senior staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct, student wellbeing and engagement policy and student management policy which specify the standards of conduct required when working with young people. Staff, as well as young people and their families, are given the opportunity to review the code of conduct.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Box Hill Senior understands that child safety is our collective responsibility. Our inclusive school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and young people) to feel confident and able in discussing any allegations of abuse or safety concerns. At Box Hill Senior, staff are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. Staff support the cultural safety of Indigenous young people, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Volunteers will be supervised by teaching staff to ensure they understand Box Hill Senior's commitment to the safety of young people and that everyone has a role to play in protecting them from abuse. This also ensures that the behaviour of volunteers is safe and appropriate (please refer to Box Hill Senior's code of conduct, student wellbeing and engagement policy and student management policy which specify the standards of conduct required when working with young people). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels.

Recruitment

At Box Hill Senior we take all reasonable steps to employ highly skilled people to work with our students. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. We understand that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

Everyone engaged in working with young people at Box Hill Senior, including volunteers, are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. 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

While the safety and wellbeing of young people 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 relevant staff, the young person and their carer/family on progress and any actions we undertake.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or 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 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 students.

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 and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a young person on social media).

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

Box Hill Senior 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 young people, 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.

All staff at Box Hill Senior 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 to the Child Safety Officer (ext. 115) or a member of the Principal team. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a young person states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the young person 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.

Evaluation:

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

This policy was ratified by School Council in August, 2016.

Signed:

(Council President).