

Aiming High

Showing Respect

Being Safe

Valuing Community

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Manor Lakes P-12 College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be a primary focus of our care and decision making. The College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe to have their voice 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 complex and multiple needs.

Every person involved in Manor Lakes College P-12 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.

State schools have a moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. This legislative requirement falls under the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

### In its planning, decision-making and operation Manor Lakes P-12 College will;

#### Uphold the priority of safety and wellbeing in children and young people by:

- implementing policies and practices that demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with governments, the police and human services agencies.
- committing to provide regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- taking a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- ensuring that all students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers

### In its planning, decision-making and operation Manor Lakes P-12 College will;

#### Empower families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns by:

- valuing and empowering children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
- fostering a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- working in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- ensuring that staff, parents/guardians/caregivers, volunteers, contractors, and students feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by college leadership.
- respecting diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount



**In its planning, decision-making and operation Manor Lakes P-12 College will;**

**Implement rigorous risk management and employment practices by:**

- providing written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- engaging only the most suitable people to work with children and ensure high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
- ensuring 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
- ensuring that all persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- committing to provide regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- reporting suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- sharing information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- maintaining appropriate confidentiality, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.
- committing to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

# FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

## Responding to Student Sexual Offending

**PROTECT**

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA  
State Government  
Education and Training

CECV  
Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd



### 1 IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to Action 2.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

### 2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible:

**VICTORIA POLICE**  
All instances on 000

If you believe that:

- the victim's parent/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
- the student who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
  - aged over 10 and under 15 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address these behaviours
  - may be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse\*.

**DHHS CHILD PROTECTION**

ALSO report internally to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team (all instances)
- Government Schools: DET Security Services Unit
- Catholic Schools: Diocesan education office

**INTERNALLY**

### YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.

- You must act by following the 4 critical actions as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion that a student is a victim of a student sexual offending and/or a student has engaged in sexual offending
  - You must act even if you are unsure and have not directly observed student sexual offending (eg. if a victim, or another person tells you about the offence)
- You must use the Responding to Student Sexual Offending template to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

### 3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal must consult with Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers of all impacted students. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/carers (eg. in circumstances where contacting the parents/carers is likely to adversely affect a Victoria Police investigation or where the student is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be notified)
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

### 4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school must provide support for students who are victim to a student sexual offence AND students who have engaged in a sexual offence. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

This support should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals, outlining support strategies. Strategies may include the development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

### CONTACT

**DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA**

- North Division 1300 664 977
- South Division 1300 655 795
- East Division 1300 360 391
- West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599
- West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977

**AFTER HOURS**

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

**CHILD FIRST**

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

**VICTORIA POLICE**

000 or contact your local police station

**DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT**

(03) 9589 6266

**STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT**

(03) 9651 3622

**EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH**

(03) 9637 2595

**DIOCESAN OFFICE**

- Melbourne (03) 9267 0228
- Ballarat (03) 5337 7135
- Sale (03) 5622 6600
- Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA**

(03) 9625 7200

