



## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

### **Rationale:**

Narre Warren South P-12 College is wholly committed to child safety. We desire all our children to be safe, happy and empowered. Support of and respect for all members of the College community, especially children, is at the core of our College values. As such, we are committed to ensuring the safety, engagement 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 all our policies and procedures. We have a duty of care and legal obligation to report serious concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, which we follow.

Narre Warren South P-12 College is committed to preventing child abuse, the early identification, removal and reduction of risks to the safety and wellbeing of children. The College has human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students in our care in addition to regular professional development for our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks and reporting processes.

Narre Warren South P-12 College is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children in the College community, and is inclusive of the many diverse cultural backgrounds and individual needs of all our students. The policies and procedures of the College support our staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### **Aims:**

This policy is intended to empower all children, who are vital and active participants of Narre Warren South P-12 College. As appropriate, 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 respect as a core aspect of our College values. This includes respect for self and others, respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds of students in the College community, respect for the individual needs of all members of the College community and respect for the right that we all have to feel safe and supported at all times.

This policy guides staff and volunteers on the duty of care and legal obligations we have to our students. All staff must abide by the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#) and volunteers must abide by the conditions and expectations of our Volunteers Policy. Teaching staff must abide by the [VIT Code of Conduct for Teachers](#)

### **Guidelines:**

- All staff are to abide by the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees.
- Volunteers must abide by the Volunteers Policy.

- Anyone working with children in the College must provide evidence of their current Working With Children Check (Non-Teaching Staff) or VIT Registration (Teaching Staff).
- Staff are required to participate in and remain up-to-date with all relevant professional development related to the prevention of and response to child abuse, in addition to the legal requirements of [Mandatory Reporting](#).
- The College uses appropriate selection criteria and processes for recruitment in line with [DET policies and guidelines for recruitment in schools](#) to ensure the staff employed at Narre Warren South P-12 College will actively work towards ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children at the College.
- If a staff member forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type, the staff member has a legal obligation to make a report to the appropriate authority. In Victoria, this is Child Protection, however it can include calling 000 if the child is deemed to be at immediate and serious risk or harm.
- The College will arrange for an interpreter, when required, to support the safety of our students.
- Staff members will make this report in conjunction with a member of the Wellbeing Team and a Principal Class Officer (PCO).
- The reporting of child sexual abuse is a community responsibility. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations of staff at the school, it is a requirement under Victorian law that any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16) disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose this belief is an offence that applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children, unless they have a reasonable excuse.
- A reasonable belief can be formed on the following basis:
  - a child states that 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 observed
  - someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
  - direct observation of suspicious behaviour
- Reported concerns for the safety and wellbeing of all students are recorded using Compass and involve the relevant members of the Wellbeing and Principal Class Officers.
- For guidance in relation to the privacy and security of information recorded, please refer to the **College Privacy Policy**.

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed as part of the College's four-year review cycle.