



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

1. COMMENCEMENT, VARIATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 1.1. This policy commences operation on 1 November 2019. The policy is subject to variation by Tintern Grammar from time to time.
- 1.2. Any amendment to the policy will be communicated to all employees, students and families on request.
- 1.3. The school will make regular and frequent public statements to demonstrate its commitment to child safety and to raise an awareness of the school community's collective responsibility to ensure all children are safe from harm.
- 1.4. This policy and relevant policy implementation documents will be made publically available on the school's website and MyTintern Portal
- 1.5. The school will put in place arrangements to ensure that the school community (including applicants for jobs) is informed about the school's child safe standards policies, procedures and allocated roles and responsibilities.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. Tintern Grammar is committed to creating and maintaining a school in which all children are safe from harm. Tintern Grammar has a zero tolerance of child abuse.¹
- 2.2. The child safe policy sets out the principles and framework governing the school's behaviours and activities that enact the child safe standards and which aim to keep all children safe from harm. The policy, together with the policy implementation documents listed in section §10, must be read and understood by all those connected to the school.
- 2.3. This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in Tintern Grammar. 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.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. Tintern Grammar is committed to child safety.
- 3.2. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, volunteers and contractors.
- 3.3. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and this duty is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of the school.
- 3.4. All allegations of child abuse and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- 3.5. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- 3.6. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, volunteers and contractors.
- 3.7. We are committed to the cultural safety of Indigenous children of Aboriginal descent, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- 3.8. We promote diversity and tolerance in Tintern Grammar, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

¹ Ministerial Order 870 requires a Statement of Commitment



4. SCOPE

- 4.1. The governing board is responsible for authorising the child safe standards policy, for overseeing its implementation and for managing the risk of child abuse.
- 4.2. The principal is responsible for the culture of the school in which this policy is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of the school and that children are safe.
- 4.3. The principal is also responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements for child safety (including, without limitation, clear and comprehensive policies, procedures, accountability mechanisms and communication strategies) are implemented, monitored and reviewed within the school.
- 4.4. The Vice Principal as designated Child Safety Officer is responsible for implementing the school's child safe standards policy and the mandated requirements of Ministerial Order 870. Staff may seek advice from the Child Safety Officer if they have concerns about child safe matters and when considering whether to make a report about a child in need of protection.
- 4.5. All staff, contractors and volunteers have a duty of care to protect children from harm and a responsibility to comply with the school's child safe standards policies and procedures.

5. AIMS

- 5.1. To protect students in our care from abuse.
- 5.2. To create and maintain a culture of child protection within the school and its community.
- 5.3. To comply with the Child Safe Standards as set out in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015:
 - 5.3.1. Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
 - 5.3.2. Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
 - 5.3.3. Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
 - 5.3.4. Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
 - 5.3.5. Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
 - 5.3.6. Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
 - 5.3.7. Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.
- 5.4. **To comply with the specific requirements as set out in Ministerial Order 870.**

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1. Our Staff, volunteers and contractors

- 6.1.1. This policy guides our staff, volunteers and contractors on how to behave with children in Tintern Grammar.
- 6.1.2. All of our staff, volunteers and contractors must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff, volunteers and contractors, as well as children and their families, are invited to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.



6.2. Training and Supervision

- 6.2.1. Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in Tintern Grammar understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- 6.2.2. Tintern Grammar aims for all staff, volunteers and contractors (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, volunteers and contractors to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- 6.2.3. We also support our staff, volunteers and contractors 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 from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.
- 6.2.4. New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Tintern Grammar'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 Tintern Grammar'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.

6.3. Recruitment

- 6.3.1. 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. Tintern Grammar understands that when recruiting staff, volunteers and contractors we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- 6.3.2. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.
- 6.3.3. All people engaged in child-related work at Tintern Grammar, 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.
- 6.3.4. Volunteers who also hold a VIT card are exempt from a Working with Children Check to volunteer at Tintern Grammar but must notify [Working With Children Check Victoria](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) of any child-related work they do outside of their teaching role within 21 days of starting this volunteer work
- 6.3.5. All teaching staff must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- 6.3.6. We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the appropriate people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain within our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision-making process.
- 6.3.7. 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.



6.4. Fair Procedures for Staff

- 6.4.1. The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to employees. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.
- 6.4.2. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form located on our user forms section of our student database, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.
- 6.4.3. We report any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or allegations regarding child abuse to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- 6.4.4. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide as appropriate updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

6.5. Privacy

- 6.5.1. 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 because of this. 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.

6.6. Legislative Responsibilities

- 6.6.1. Tintern Grammar takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:
- 6.6.2. 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.
- 6.6.3. Failure to protect: People of authority in Tintern Grammar 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.²
- 6.6.4. Any staff who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.³ All adults are required by legislation to take responsibility for Mandatory Reporting.

6.7. Risk Management

- 6.7.1. 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.

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#)

<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

³ 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](#). <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.



6.7.2. 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 (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

6.8. Regular Review

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

6.9. Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

6.9.1. Tintern Grammar takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff, volunteers and contractors are trained to deal appropriately with allegations of child abuse.

6.9.2. We work to ensure all children, families, staff, volunteers and contractors know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

6.9.3. 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).

6.9.4. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- 6.9.4.1. a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- 6.9.4.2. behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- 6.9.4.3. someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- 6.9.4.4. observing suspicious behaviour.

7. LINKS TO RELATED TINTERN GRAMMAR POLICIES

- 7.1. Mandatory Reporting Policy
- 7.2. Privacy Policy
- 7.3. Complaints Policy.
- 7.4. Mandatory Reporting Policy
- 7.5. Obligation to Report Child Abuse Policy
- 7.6. Reportable Conduct Policy
- 7.7. Counselling Policy

8. DEFINITIONS

8.1. 'Child safety' encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.⁴

8.2. 'Child abuse'⁵ includes:

8.3. any act committed against a child involving:

- 8.3.1. a sexual offence; or ^[L]_[SEP]
- 8.3.2. an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming);

⁴ As defined in Ministerial Order 870.

⁵ As defined in Ministerial Order 870. The Ministerial Order states that this definition explicitly goes beyond child sexual abuse.



- 8.3.3. and ^[1]_{SEP} the infliction, on a child, of:
- 8.3.4. physical violence; or ^[1]_{SEP}
- 8.3.5. serious emotional or psychological harm; and ^[1]_{SEP}
- 8.3.6. serious neglect of a child.

8.4. Ministerial Order 870 defines a 'child' as a child enrolled as a student at the school.⁶

8.5. 'Child connected work' means work authorised by or on behalf of the governing board and performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.⁷

8.6. 'The school environment' means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the governing board for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- 8.6.1. a campus of the school; ^[1]_{SEP}
- 8.6.2. online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and ^[1]_{SEP}
- 8.6.3. other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

9. REFERENCES TO EXTERNAL POLICY/LEGISLATION/COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTS (Use as relevant)

- 9.1. Duty of Care
- 9.2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 (Vic.)
- 9.3. Ministerial Order 870 January 2016 (Vic.)
- 9.4. Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards: mandated registration requirements
- 9.5. Crimes Act 1958 (amended) (Vic.)
- 9.6. Betrayal of Trust Report 2014 (Vic.)
- 9.7. Working With Children Act 2005.

10. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENTS

- 10.1. Child Safe Code of Conduct – Board, Employees, Volunteers and Contractors Working With Children.
- 10.2. Communication plan to inform the school community about the school's child safe standards policies and procedures, allocated roles and responsibilities
- 10.3. Child Safe Standards implementation monitoring and review procedures
- 10.4. Code of Conduct (staff)
- 10.5. School staff recruitment, supervision and management process
- 10.6. Induction Handbook including child safe standards policy
- 10.7. Training and guidance in recognising the signs and indications of child abuse and grooming
- 10.8. Strategic plan to promote child empowerment and participation.

11. APPROVAL

- 11.1. Policy Approved by: Tintern Grammar Executive
- 11.2. July, 2016
- 11.3. Reviewer: *Vice Principal*
- 11.4. Review Cycle: *3 Years*
- 11.5. Revision Date: **September 2022**

⁶ The definition of 'child' can vary within different legislation and different jurisdictions. In different places a child defined as a person under the age of 16, under the age of 17, or under the age of 18.

⁷ As defined in Ministerial Order 870. This is a broader definition than that used in the Working With Children Act 2005.