



CREST EDUCATION CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK

Version 2
August 2019

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From the Executive Principal

The massively significant and culture-shifting Commonwealth 'Royal Commission Report into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse' was released at the end of 2017. It examined past and current child sexual abuse and related matters in organisations and institutions, and how institutions have responded to this abuse.

An executive summary of the Royal Commission report can be found here:

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/preface-and-executive-summary>

The Commissioners investigated where institutions and systems have failed and what the best practice is in responding to child sexual abuse. Crest Education has considered the key recommendations of the final report of the Royal Commission and has committed to a wide range of practical responses to contemporary issues in the protection of children.

We reiterate that the abuse of children should not be tolerated in our community. Crest Education is fully supportive of the Victorian Government's adoption of mandatory Child Safe Standards as well as the more recent adoption of a set of National Principles whose aim is to ensure that institutions which care for children of all ages are genuinely safe places for them.

Child safety is an ongoing key focus at Crest Education. Providing a safe and supportive environment for children has always been an important part of being a Christian School. Legislation and compliance now demand all schools in Victoria to take child safety much more seriously. We are committed as a school community to doing our part to protect the children under our care. A safe environment includes developing a culture of child safety in the school, including a zero tolerance of child abuse. We all have been entrusted with an obligation to do the best we possibly can to keep our children safe from harm. We have embraced the opportunity to strengthen the safety of our operations and aim to further develop a culture of child safety. We do not simply aim for compliance with the Child Safe standards; instead we seek to be a place of excellence where child safety is deeply embedded into the culture of the organisation.

The feedback and support of parents, staff, volunteers and contractors in continually developing a child safe culture is greatly valued. During 2019, a key focus has been the review of the existing Child Safety Framework including all policies and practices around student safety and wellbeing. A number of key policy documents have been updated to ensure children's safety and wellbeing is a priority and that the College is implementing procedures compliant with legislation.

We recognise that the awareness of the importance of the safety of children needs to be woven through the entire organisation for it to be effective. As such, the Crest Board annually commits to reviewing and ratifying the Crest Child Safe Policy. The Child Safe Policy is a comprehensive and overarching document that provides an overview of the key elements of Crest Education's approach to creating a child safe organisation. The purpose of this policy is:

- To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within Crest Education.
- To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
- To prevent child abuse within Crest Education.
- To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and / or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to staff / volunteers / contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the College.
- To provide a clear statement to staff /volunteers / contractors forbidding any such abuse.
- To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

It takes many components and ongoing vigilance to build a child safe organisation. A key objective for Crest Education is to continue to embed child safe practices into our culture. The work that is involved in building a child safe organisation is never completed. It is a dynamic, multifaceted and ongoing developmental process of learning,

monitoring and reviewing. Maintaining a child safe organisation is not a one-off task. It must become part of our College's ongoing processes and be embedded into our culture.

The Board, Cabinet and Executive Leadership Teams at Crest Education are committed to implementing the following minimum Child Safe standards:

- a) Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety;
- b) A Child Safe Policy;
- c) A Child Safe Code of Conduct;
- d) Screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse;
- e) Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
- f) Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse; and
- g) Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment.

The widely quoted traditional African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child". The "village" has never been more necessary than it is today. We look forward to working with all stakeholders in the Crest community to protect the children in our College.

Please do not hesitate to contact the College if you have any questions about our updated Child Safe Framework Document.

I wish to remind our College community to please call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.

Mr Geoff Grace
Executive Principal
Crest Education
August 2019

CREST'S VISION/MISSION/PHILOSOPHY, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STAFF PORTRAIT - A CONNECTION TO THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Our Vision:

To be a leading provider of quality Christian Education, delivered by Christian staff, equipping students for a life of faithful service.

Our Mission:

To partner with parents and the wider community to help develop within each student the desire and capacity to discover and fulfil the will of God for their lives.

Our Philosophy:

Crest Education offers students a holistic education established on a Christian foundation. The basis of this foundation is God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer and the Bible as the inspired Word of God. (2 Tim 3:16 – 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness')

We consider that young people are transformed through having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ and developing a biblically grounded and shaped worldview about God, themselves, human society and creation. The College seeks to instil in students a high standard of biblical morality, an understanding of social justice and deep respect for others. In turn they can be a transforming influence in their homes, communities, and work as they use their unique personalities, dispositions, abilities and talents to love God and love others, as Jesus commanded (Matthew 22:37-39)

We are committed, in all we do, to be 'others-centred'; considering the needs of others above our own. An essential outworking of our learning programs, community service and local, national and international mission is to instil in students a keen sense of social justice, a respect for and understanding of others, and compassion toward the poor and marginalised. As an organisation we seek to serve our community by providing affordable quality Christian education that benefits as many as possible as an outworking of these beliefs.

We want the Gospel – the Good News of Jesus' sinless life, sacrificial death and resurrection to powerfully shape the whole educational enterprise at Crest. We believe that a child's uniqueness is fully realised when they come to a living, dynamic faith in Him. As a result, they learn to make wise choices in accordance with God's will. We are therefore focused on seeing Jesus' work on the Cross transform our students in order that they can fully flourish, spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually, and become agents of reconciliation in the process.

Integral to all that happens at Crest is the web of productive relationships between students, staff and families. Students are fully engaged in learning when they have: meaningful interactions and friendships with other students; are inspired and equipped by teachers who connect in meaningful ways with them; engaged by well-planned and delivered curriculum; and the College and parents find mutual advantage through committed partnership. Crest seeks also to build associations with churches, organisations and other communities, both locally and internationally, that can result in common benefit, especially in enabling students to be responsible global citizens.

Our goal is to be an educational community which seeks to promote biblical excellence, which is defined as positive growth, transformation and refinement of our hearts, thinking and understanding, character and actions. In so doing, as a community we will grow in the knowledge and love of God and seek to serve others in our lives. As such, we are committed to ensuring that we are innovative and future-oriented in all we do. We deem the educational enterprise in the 21st century to be an exciting and ever-changing one that places the development of and outcomes for each

child at the centre. It is essential that the learning process, by which students acquire and use knowledge, understanding and wisdom, is accessible by all. We recognise that teaching is a profoundly powerful enterprise and that each teacher is able to positively impact the learning and formation of every student. We offer multiple curriculum approaches and a broad range of subjects and learning pathways that provide students with opportunities to excel and teachers' scope to teach skilfully and innovatively. All curriculum is designed to carefully integrate faith and learning with the ultimate purpose being the holistic development of each student across Crest as they grow in faith and good works.

CREST GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The pursuit of faith, identity and character

Each student explores and discovers God's unique calling on their lives within the larger context of their identity as His image-bearers (Genesis 1:26), creation stewards and cultivators (Genesis 1:28-30), ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20), and pursuers of shalom (Hebrews 12:14)

2. The instilling of Gospel-driven excellence

The good news of Jesus' salvation for us needs to be at the heart of all we do. We can have confidence and humility in pursuing excellence, not as an end in itself, but in a way, which reflects the goodness of God and His purposes for our lives.

3. The application of Biblical principles

A Biblical worldview underpins learning, teaching, curriculum, assessment and cultural formation. It results in an environment imbued with hope, integrity, accountability, transparency and sustainability

4. The creation of a safe, relational and engaging environment

The College offers human and practical resources, [a unique and child safe environment](#) and opportunities to develop the diverse gifts and talents God has given to each member of the College community. The importance of developing healthy and sustainable relationships will be a focus throughout Crest

5. Partnering with parents and the wider community

We recognise and affirm the pivotal and interconnected role which parents, carers, the broader family and the wider community play in the healthy formation of students from ELC right through to their Year 12 graduation

6. The commitment to serving others in community

Students and staff are viewed as social beings and the College as a learning community where they can practice living and serving others in redemptive ways within and beyond Crest.

A PORTRAIT OF A CREST STAFF MEMBER

There are four interrelated and central tenets to epitomise Crest employees:

Spiritual authenticity

- What is mission-critical is that there is a genuine relationship with God through Jesus Christ
- We recognise that this faith is lived out through various denominational and cultural traditions in the workplace

Right Conduct

- This faith is a lived reality in the ways in which staff serve throughout the Crest community
- The **Crest Code of Conduct** is the best guide for what is considered appropriate and edifying across Crest

Professional expertise

- There is no false dichotomy in our employment – we seek genuine Christian staff who have high levels of capability in their area of expertise
- Lifelong learning is a given – all staff need to keep growing and developing in their understanding and capability in their role

Intent and Impact

- Staff desire to make an impact in their roles – for the glory of God and for the wellbeing and growth of others. It is essential that all staff have such a heart for their roles and see their work as a ministry, not just a job.

VISION/MISSION - CONNECTION TO CHILD SAFETY

There are three profoundly important connections between Crest’s Vision, Mission, Philosophy, Guiding Principles and Staff Portrait, and a wholehearted commitment to Child Safety.

1. As a Christian organisation which holds firmly to the understanding that all humanity is created in the image of God, we hold to be an undeniable truth that all people - regardless of age, sex, religion, economic status, intellectual capacity or educational attainment – have an inherent dignity, not for what they can do but for who they are. As a result, we reaffirm that we have zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and, in particular, child abuse in its various aberrations.
2. We recognise that there is a deep brokenness in us - individually and corporately - which can only be genuinely addressed through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who died that our sins may be forgiven and that our relationship with God, ourselves and one another may be restored. Whilst we look to this being perfected beyond this present age, we know that we need to be vigilant as a community so that the wellbeing of one another – particularly the most vulnerable amongst us – will remain a top priority and an ongoing focus.
3. According to Crest’s philosophy, ‘the College seeks to instil in students a high standard of biblical morality, an understanding of social justice and deep respect for others. In turn they can be a transforming influence in their homes, communities, and work as they use their unique personalities, dispositions, abilities and talents to love God and love others, as Jesus commanded (Matthew 22:37-39).’

Clearly this needs to be modelled on a daily basis through precept and action so that the graduates from Crest have had opportunity from their education to deeply imbibe a profound sense of the importance of loving God and loving others – the two greatest commandments. We pray that this proactive focus will empower Crest students and families to not only reject abuse in all its forms but also to embrace that which is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8)

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Given Crest’s wholehearted support of the Child Safe Standards, this can be encapsulated by the following statements:

- Crest Education is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.
- All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.
- Crest Education has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Crest Education is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.
- Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Crest Education, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Crest Education community.
- Crest Education will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

- Crest Education supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Crest Education is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability

AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF THE VICTORIAN CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe Standards to improve the way organisations that provide services for children prevent and respond to child abuse that may occur within their organisation.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 6) documented that in April 2012, the Victorian Government initiated an inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and other non-government organisations.

The inquiry's final report, *Betrayal of Trust*, made a number of recommendations that have been acted on by successive Victorian government. These included:

- **Criminal law reform** – offences relating to grooming, failure to protect and failure to disclose.
- **Creating child safe organisations** – mandatory Child Safe Standards and a reportable conduct scheme. The standards are compulsory for all organisations working with children.
- **Civil law reform** – removal of the time limit on legal action. Legislation has removed the previous 12-year timeframe in which victims (including family members) needed to have commenced civil legal action for damages due to wrongful death (brought by dependants of a deceased victim) or personal injury resulting from child abuse. This reform applies to both past and future cases of child abuse.

The State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p.1) noted that the Child Safe Standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children. Furthermore, the Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers. The Department highlighted that will assist organisations to:

- Prevent child abuse;
- Encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur;
- Improve responses to any allegations of child abuse.

The Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p.1) also reported, “The Child Safe Standards are a central feature of the Victorian Government’s response to the Family and Community Development Committee of the Victorian Parliament’s *Betrayal of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations (Betrayal of Trust Inquiry)*.”

1. For further information about the *Betrayal of Trust* implementation, please refer to:
<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/betrayal-of-trust-fact-sheet-the-new>
2. Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website:
<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/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:
<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to>

SUMMARY OF CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

In complying with the child safe standards, Crest Education must include the following **Principles of Inclusion** as part of each standard:

- Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

In addition, to create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the **Standards** apply must have:

- **Standard 1:** Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- **Standard 2:** A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- **Standard 3:** A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- **Standard 4:** Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- **Standard 5:** Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- **Standard 6:** Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- **Standard 7:** Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Now that the Royal Commission report has been published and publicly accepted, we recognise that we need to adhere to the 10 National Principles for Child Safety (which are closely aligned to the current 7 Victorian Standards around which this framework has been built). Should the National Principles become the new mandated standards in Victoria, then this Crest Framework will need to be modified to reflect the change, but there will be no need for a substantive overhaul given that the State Standards and National Principles are in close alignment.

NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

National Principle	Equivalent State Standard
1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.	Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.	Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.	
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.	
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.	Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.	Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and	Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

young people safe through ongoing education and training.	
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.	
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.	Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.	Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

1. Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children.

A child safe organisation respects cultural differences and variations in child rearing practices due to a family’s personal, cultural or religious beliefs. The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 12) highlighted, “Cultural diversity refers to people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs or views.”

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 12) also stated, “... a child safe organisation recognises that these differences do not reduce a child’s right to be safe or the organisation’s responsibility to protect the child from harm.” Furthermore, “The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Interim Report noted that some children are more vulnerable to abuse, based on various factors including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and prior abuse or neglect” (p. 12).

Crest Education acknowledges the Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 12) who have noted that respecting diversity means:

- Valuing and respecting people’s beliefs
- Building responsive relationships
- Communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs
- Examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs and respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another
- Acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance.

The State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p. 9) documented: ‘Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented in institutions including child protection, youth justice and out-of-home care systems. The reasons for this are complex and influenced by past policies like forced removals, the effects of lower socio-economic status and differences in child rearing practices and intergenerational trauma. Additionally, impacts of abuse are heightened for Aboriginal children who may not feel culturally safe enough to report abuse.’

The Child Safe Standards require organisations to consider cultural safety of Aboriginal children across the implementation of all the standards. Crest Education is committed to developing and updating policies and procedures to consider cultural safety of Aboriginal children. This is also reflected in the Action Plan included in this Strategy Document.

For more information and resources addressing the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, please refer to:

Australian Institute of Family Studies ‘Child Protection and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’ CFCA Resource Sheet September 2015, <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/child-protection-and-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-children>

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Bringing Them Home: The 'Stolen Generation' Report (1997): www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/bringing-them-home-stolen

2. Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

The Child Safe Standards require organisations to consider cultural safety of culturally and / or linguistically diverse (CaLD) children across the implementation of all the standards. Crest Education will consider on an ongoing basis the needs of culturally and / or linguistically diverse children when reviewing a range of wellbeing policies. Given the significant and increasing cultural diversity of our student population, it is vital that we are mindful of the greater risk factors associated with the safety of the CaLD student cohorts

The State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, pp. 9-10) highlighted: 'There is a lack of data on the incidence of abuse of children from CaLD backgrounds. However, it is understood that these children face unique risks leading to their involvement with child protection services, including distrust of social service providers. It has been reported that CaLD children, particularly those from refugee or asylum seeker communities, are also more likely to have experienced trauma or displacement and loss (or have parents who have) before coming to Australia. CaLD children and families may also experience communication barriers when it comes to reporting abuse and knowing where to go for support.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 14) documented a range of strategies that schools can implement to promote the cultural safety. Crest Education can promote the cultural safety of children from CaLD backgrounds by:

- Ensuring our organisation clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination;
- Being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds;
- Recognising times of importance to different cultures;
- Ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of decoration and artwork;
- Employing staff that are representative of your local community;
- Actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved
- Asking about the best way to provide information to children and families

3. Promoting the safety of children with a disability

At Crest Education, we acknowledge that people with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community and should be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities. In particular, people with a disability have the same rights as other members of the community to live free from abuse. The Child Safe Standards require organisations to consider the safety of children with a disability across the implementation of all the standards.

All education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). The Standards give students and prospective students with a disability the right to education and training opportunities on the same basis as students without a disability.

Teaching and support staff at Crest Education continue to update their understanding of how to best support Students with a Disability through annual mandated online learning modules. This will certainly make a difference in the overall inclusion of such students at Crest and will give greater insights into the concomitant risks faced by them within and beyond the school environment.

The Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p. 10) reported that: 'Children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused compared with children without a disability.

A number of factors may contribute to the risk of abuse including:

- physical impairments

- difficulties with speech and communication,
- memory,
- literacy,
- vision and hearing impairments, and
- reliance on caregivers.

People with a disability often receive less sexual education than their peers. These factors may also contribute to poor recognition of abuse of children with a disability.

It was also noted by the Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p. 10) that, “Children with a disability are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need if they have been abused. Children with a disability are very diverse, with a wide range of needs depending on the nature of their disability and the individual characteristics and circumstances of the child.”

Establishing child safe policies and procedures that recognise issues relating to disability helps to make these vulnerable children and their families safer. It has been widely reported that children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may have limited communication and social skills to respond in such situations. Crest Education is committed to adopting a proactive approach to this risk, which has been documented in the Action Plan included in this Framework.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 15) have highlighted a range of strategies that schools can implement to promote the safety of children with a disability. Crest Education can promote the safety of children with a disability by:

- Acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure our risk assessment processes considers their needs;
- Ensuring our College clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children, notwithstanding situations where unreasonable adjustments have been expected;
- Making sure the environment does not pose reasonable access difficulties;
- Being responsive to families regarding specific adjustments that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability;
- Supporting our staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability; and,
- Thinking about how we can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families.

STANDARD 1 - STRATEGIES TO EMBED AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY, INCLUDING THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Victorian State Government Ministerial Order 870 states that:

The school governing authority must:

- (a) Develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school;
- (b) Allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
- (c) Inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;
- (d) Put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and
- (e) Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

A BROAD COMMITMENT FROM THE DIRECTORS OF CREST EDUCATION

The Crest Education Board acknowledges that quality governance arrangements, underpinned by a firm commitment from executive leadership to Crest's values and standards are the starting point to embedding a culture of child safety. Strategies that seek to prevent harm and neglect (including physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, racial, cultural and/or religious abuse) all contribute to a child safe culture. It is therefore critical that child safety is part of the everyday thinking and practice of all within the Crest community.

The Crest Board recognises that it is important to maintain the momentum of a child safe culture by monitoring performance and checking that child safety continues to be prominent in the ongoing governance and planning of the Crest organisation.

OVERVIEW

At the conclusion of the Victorian inquiry into institutionalised child abuse, the 'Betrayal of Trust' report was tabled. The Family and Community Development Committee stated that, "...the process for responding to suspected criminal child abuse needs to be part of an organisation's culture, leadership and internal practices. The culture and senior management of an organisation must actively support the reporting of suspicions or allegations of criminal child abuse to the police and relevant authorities. The organisation must also have an ongoing commitment to reviewing and continuously improving its processes." These sentiments were wholeheartedly strengthened and endorsed by the publication of the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Child Sexual Abuse, handed down in December 2017.

In line with these comments, and the legislative provisions introduced in Victoria, Crest Education will approach the challenge of creating a best practice model with regards to being a child-safe organisation on the following four fronts.

1. FROM THE TOP DOWN

Creating the right culture in our organisation will not be possible unless the Board and senior leadership are conspicuously and explicitly committed to ensuring a child-safe organisation. It is the overarching responsibility of the Crest Board to ensure the organisation has the appropriate policies, procedures and culture in place to both safeguard children in our care and to respond to allegations and incidents involving the safety of children.

We acknowledge that it is the responsibility, under the direction of the Board, and of senior leadership to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures are adhered to, such that Crest can consistently and reasonably demonstrate that the organisation will:

- Safeguard against the risk of child abuse; and
- Respond effectively if abuse is suspected or confirmed.

The Crest Board and senior staff will publicly commit to these principles and will ensure that the organisation's strategic plans, guiding principles and educational charter statements will include specific consideration of child safety. In addition, the Directors of Crest Education will satisfy themselves that their organisation is adhering to all legislative requirements.

Policies and procedures

A Child-safe Policy and a Code of Conduct are two essential documents for any organisation whose volunteers, employees or contractors come into contact with children. The Crest Board has ensured that the organisation has appropriate policies and procedures in place to promote child safety and reduce risk. They will, in addition, ensure that these policies are reviewed on an annual basis.

Child Safe policy

The clearly worded Crest Education Child-safe Policy has been written and includes:

- A statement expressing Crest Education's commitment to child safety;
- A definition of what constitutes child abuse;
- Procedures and decision-making processes that surround Crest Education's interactions and involvement with children;
- An outline of Crest Education's recruitment and supervision processes;
- Processes for identifying and managing child abuse risks;
- Processes for reporting and handling child abuse concerns and complaints;
- Processes of managing communication about suspected or actual child abuse, both internally and externally;
- A description of the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in protecting children, including the duty of care of the Board, management, staff and volunteers;
- A statement setting out Crest Education's commitment to honouring different cultural traditions when protecting children;
- A statement setting out Crest Education's commitment to the safety of children with a disability; and
- Information about how the policy is implemented, governed and reviewed.

Code of Conduct

The Crest Board has also ensured that the organisation has an up-to-date Child Safe Code of Conduct which includes:

- Clear expectations that an inherent requirement for Crest staff is that they profess their own personal faith in Jesus Christ and are willing to live in light of this faith commitment with integrity, honesty and accountability. We expect that this foundational expectation will provide the basis for all staff seeking to honour the Child Safe standards, policies and practices throughout the organisation.
- Clear and specific standards of conduct for working with children in different situations relevant to the organisation.
- Clear expectations of appropriate relationships with children for staff, volunteers and families (e.g. when it is appropriate for there to be physical contact, social media boundaries, etc.);
- Instructions on how adults will respond to any risks adults may pose to children, or that children may pose to each other;
- Guidance about how inappropriate conduct (or conduct that is not consistent with any legislation or code) will be reported;
- Recognition of the needs of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Recognition of the needs of children with a disability and appropriate behaviour and relationships for personnel and children (e.g. appropriate ways to physically and emotionally assist a child with a disability).

- **The Crest Child Safe Policy will be signed off by the Board Chair on an annual basis. Prior to this sign off, a formal review of Crest’s Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and practices will be completed by the Board, ordinarily through the Risk Sub-Committee.**

2. IMPLEMENTING CHILD-SAFE POLICIES/PROCEDURES

As the Victorian Inquiry’s Betrayal of Trust report (2013) and the Royal Commission report (2017) highlighted, merely having policies in place does not guarantee child safety. Organisations must ensure all relevant people (volunteers, contractors and staff) have the knowledge, skills and capability required to create, implement and follow appropriate systems and processes. It’s generally not enough to communicate the existence of policies and procedures; training is required as well.

Crest Education needs to continue to refine processes for regularly reviewing and updating policies and procedures to ensure that our organisation is compliant with:

- All mandatory processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
 - The requirements of the Reportable Conduct Scheme (2017) and our obligations to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP);
 - Any new child safety standards (as this area is regularly evolving); and
 - Any further legislative changes surrounding child safety.
- **It is imperative that the training of staff is done systematically and effectively. We acknowledge that this will require time and effective resourcing and are committed to ensuring that the Crest community is a safe place for all, including children. In light of this, the Crest Cabinet will take the responsibility to review legislation in this area at least annually and update policies accordingly. This will be done in consultation with the HR/OHS Manager. These updates will be communicated clearly to the Board as part of its annual review of Crest’s Child-safe Policy and Code of Conduct.**

3. EMPOWERING CHILDREN

Organisations where children and young adults feel free to question and speak up are the most child-safe organisations of all. Through Crest Education’s policies, as well as the behaviour of its leaders and staff, children should be encouraged to come forward with questions or concerns about adult behaviour as well as inappropriate behaviour of their peers.

There are a number of ways to empower children within Crest Education to speak up about both child abuse and behaviour that might lead to child abuse. These steps include:

- Ensuring all relevant policies and procedures are written in plain English and are made publicly available online;
- Making sure children know that Crest Education cares about their feelings and safety – for example by exhibiting child-friendly posters and statements of our values;
- Discussing with children under our organisation’s care or supervision the relevant policies and procedures, and providing practical examples of situations which might/would be necessary for children to disclose;
- Making a strong commitment to children’s participation (i.e. being inclusive of all children) and providing staff with resources that support participation;
- Building children’s confidence and assisting them to develop skills for participation, such as communication skills;
- Matching participation methods to the age, capabilities and background of the children and being adaptive to their ways of working;
- Creating opportunities for children to be involved in policy and program development, implementation and review, including being honest with children about the extent of their involvement, and giving feedback on how their views have been actioned;

- Establishing pathways and mechanisms (e.g. an anonymous suggestion box, opportunities for children to communicate with and get to trust a variety of adults, etc.) which enable children to raise concerns safely and with confidence; and
- Using inclusive and empowering, child-friendly language in everyday activities and relevant written documents.

Education

Another key factor in empowering children is to provide sensitive education on appropriate adult behaviour and how to spot and respond to the signs of inappropriate conduct. Whilst adults within our organisation must be alert to the warning signs of grooming and child sexual abuse, providing children in the care of our organisation with appropriate education about their bodies and personal boundaries will further strengthen our organisation's child protection strategy.

Education may take place face to face (e.g. in a classroom setting) or via documented resources. It is recommended that an appropriately qualified individual (such as a child psychologist, nurse or child counsellor with training expertise) provide this type of education.

The sorts of topics usually covered in such training include:

- Naming body parts – encouraging children to use proper names for body parts and explaining that certain parts are private;
- Secrets – talking to children about the differences between a good secret and a bad secret, the importance of not keeping secrets from parents, how to be alert for tricks and bribes;
- Safe and not-safe touches – an explanation about the difference between 'safe touches' and touches to private parts or those that make a child feel mad, upset or confused;
- It's OK to tell – reinforcing to children that they will never get in trouble for telling trusted adults that someone touched them or did something that they were not comfortable about;
- Adults aren't always right – explaining to children that some adults, peers and older children can do wrong things and it's important they let another adult know if they are worried about something
- Feelings and instincts – helping children to identify and talk about their feelings, encouraging them to trust their instincts, and telling them how to get help;
- Trusted adults – ensuring that children know who they can go to when they have a question or concern (there should always be a number of nominated personnel specified); and
- Communication – encouraging open communication and discussions about experiences and feelings. Children should also be provided with education about cyber safety to protect them against online grooming by predatory individuals. For example, many organisations do not allow staff or volunteers to be 'friends' on Facebook or other social media with children in their care. As this is the case at Crest, this should be explained to students so that they can identify inappropriate behaviour if/as it arises. There should also be education provided to both adults and children about expected behaviours and boundaries in online interactions such as social media.

- **As a result of these commitments to educating the Crest community, the Cabinet will ensure that appropriate frameworks are established and embedded to ensure that Student Voice and all relevant practices are resourced and scheduled so that all students are empowered and equipped to help to maintain their own safety and those of others around them**

4. ENABLING DISCLOSURE

In line with the robust statements made by the Royal Commission and the Victorian inquiry, Crest Education will seek to foster a culture that encourages all children and adults to speak up about any concerns regarding a child's wellbeing. The following statement from the Royal Commission's report highlights this point: "It is apparent that perpetrators are more likely to offend when an institution lacks the appropriate culture and is not managed with the protection of children as a high priority."

The Victorian Betrayal of Trust report echoed this point, saying: “Although having a process that requires personnel to report allegations or suspicions to management is important, there is also a need to ensure that the culture of the organisation supports such disclosures.”

Child-safe organisations are those that foster and demonstrate openness in multiple ways. This helps to create a culture whereby all persons (including staff/contractors, volunteers, parents/carers and children) feel confident and comfortable to disclose to management any of their child safety concerns. Strategies that help to create such a culture include:

- Having management lead by example and establish an honest two-way communication between themselves and others. Management should take the time to listen to others and encourage the expression of different viewpoints;
- Insisting that all interactions between staff, volunteers, parents/carers and children are respectful;
- Talking openly and honestly, where appropriate, about any past issues, alongside steps that have been taken to ensure those issues do not occur again;
- Treating personal information confidentially and respecting individuals’ privacy; and
- Being open and transparent with parents and children about Crest Education’s privacy practices. This might include informing children that their counselling records could be accessed by others in certain circumstances. As recommended by the Victorian Government and arising out of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, Crest Education will clearly communicate child safety policies and procedures to all staff, volunteers, children and families, and publish policies for child safety on our College websites, including the Ayr Hill Equestrian website.

Protection for reporters

Every state and territory have enacted legislation which protects individuals who make reports about suspected child abuse in good faith. ‘Good faith’ means the reporter has a valid and reasonable concern and is acting without malice or retaliation towards the alleged offender.

Crest Education will promote a confidential reporting culture that respects individual privacy while maintaining adequate record keeping of child safety issues. These protections ensure that the report:

- Cannot result in the reporter being seen as unprofessional or having breached professional ethics; and
 - Does not make the reporter liable for any disciplinary or legal action (including in cases that are not proven).
- **As a child-safe organisation Crest Education shall ensure that everyone (including Board members, managers, staff, volunteers, contractors, counsellors, youth workers, chaplains, carers, parents and children – everyone) is made aware of their rights to report any concerns that they have of inappropriate behaviour towards children, and that they will not suffer any professional or legal consequences so long as they report in good faith. Reports need to be made internally and externally in line with Crest Education’s policies and procedures and the applicable state-based legislation. In addition, Crest has appointed appropriately trained Child Safety officers across the organisation to be points of contact for the Crest community to raise issues and concerns with.**

Commitments to Good Practice

1. Crest Education will develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school

Indicator of good practice

- Members of the Crest community (teachers, admin and support staff, parents, students and volunteers) will feel empowered to discuss child safety and raise any concerns about child abuse.

Good practices

- Effective governance arrangements are in place to authorise and agree on strategies.

- Embed the goal of child safety in College documentation to convey the vision, mission and strategic direction of the school in relation to child safety.
- Recognise the diverse needs of children across Crest. For example, it is important that schools are inclusive and culturally safe places for children and parents. Importantly, some children (e.g. young children, CALD children and/or children with a disability) are at greater risk of abuse or exploitation and need greater levels of supervision and support.
- Include Child Safety as a standing item on Staff Meeting agendas.

2. Crest Education will allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies

Indicator of good practice

- Key people have appropriate skills and capacity to undertake child safety roles and responsibilities. This includes teachers and school leaders and also extends to support staff, student counsellors, as well as business managers of contracted service providers who work with or near school children.

Good practices

- College-based roles and responsibilities for child safety are known and understood across the Crest community.
- Students, school staff, and members of the Crest community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety in the school.
- Capability will be continuously built by
 - making training available in relation to key responsibilities
 - including responsibilities in position descriptions or as part of staff development processes
 - providing ongoing induction and training for all staff and volunteers in child safety including how to recognise and respond to child abuse.

3. Crest Education will inform the school community about strategies, allocated roles and responsibilities

Indicator of good practice

- Child safety is a core part of Crest's public and internal communication.

Good practices

- Crest's communications about the child safe strategies:
 - identifies key people and roles
 - covers the roles of all people in the Crest community
 - covers the range of school environments (e.g. camps, online)
 - uses a mix of communication tools (verbal, online, print).
- Provide opportunities for staff, students, parents and the Crest community to engage with child safety (e.g. community forums).

4. Crest Education will put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices

Indicator of good practice:

- Keep the Crest community updated about progress in putting strategies into practice, changing strategies or developing new strategies.

Good practices:

- Child safety champions – one or more roles in the school with responsibility to promote, monitor and/or report on the implementation of Crest's child safety strategies (with appropriate leadership support).
- Report progress to the Crest Board.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for staff, students, parents and the Crest community to engage with child safety issues (e.g. community forums).

5. Crest Education will periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies

Indicator of good practice:

- There is a system (including schedule, roles and reporting) for periodic review (e.g. every year) and improvement of child safety related policies and practices.

Good practices:

- Proactively planning Crest's approach to review, including governance oversight.
- Consult with staff, and the wider school community to inform strategic decisions about child safety.
- Consider continuous improvement opportunities such as incorporating child safety questions in existing surveys to measure awareness and confidence in Crest's approach.
- Conduct a review after a potential risk or report occurs in the school.
- Outcomes of all reviews are communicated.

Resources and References

- Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*, Ministerial Order No. 870.
<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafepages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf>
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) *Information Sheet. CHILD SAFETY STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety.*
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard1_FactSheetStrategiesChildSafety.pdf
- Commission for Children and Young People (2018) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation*, Version 4.0.
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/CSSGuideFinalV4-Web-New.pdf>
- A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/parents/health/mandreportsep10.pdf>
- Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Documents/protectionofchildren.PDF>
- Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations – e-learning module
<http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/external/>

STANDARD 2 - CREST CHILD SAFE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Crest Education is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working and volunteering at Crest Education is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse. This reflects the intent of **Ministerial Order 870** which states that:

The school governing authority must ensure that the school has a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety which details:

- (a) The values and principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- (b) The actions the school proposes to take to:
 - (i) Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy or statement of commitment
 - (ii) Support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
 - (iii) Support or assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

The school governing authority must inform the school community about the policy or statement and make the policy or statement publicly available.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is

1. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
2. To prevent child abuse within Crest Education.
3. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
4. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
5. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
6. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

POLICY

- Crest Education is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.
- All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

- Crest Education has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Crest Education is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.
- Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Crest Education, all employees, workers, volunteers, contractors, associates, and members of the Crest Education community.
- Crest Education will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.
- Crest Education supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Crest Education is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
- If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The **Board of Crest Education** has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.
2. The **Executive Principal** of Crest Education is responsible for:
 - Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
 - Ensuring that all staff, relevant* contractors and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
 - Ensuring that all adults within the Crest Education community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
 - Ensuring that all staff, relevant contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
 - Providing support for staff, relevant contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

* In this case, 'relevant' denotes those contractors and volunteers who are likely to have any level of contact and involvement with Crest Education students as part of their work
3. All **managers** must ensure that they:
 - Promote child safety at all times;
 - Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
 - Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
 - Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Management should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All **staff/relevant contractors and volunteers** share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Crest Education's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;

- Report any reasonable belief that a child’s safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child’s safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children’s emotional and physical safety.

EMPLOYMENT OF NEW PERSONNEL

Crest Education undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share Crest Education’s values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at Crest Education if they pose a risk to children.
- Crest Education requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation’s recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Crest Education.
- Persons applying for a role as a teacher/trainer with either Hillcrest Christian College, Rivercrest Christian College or the Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching or be in the process of acquiring their Permission to Teach.
- Crest Education may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at Crest Education and during their time with Crest Education at regular intervals.
- Crest Education will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.
- Once engaged, staff, relevant contractors and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

REPORTING

- Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the DHHS or the police. They should also advise their supervisor about their concern.
- In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of leadership.
- Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the Executive Principal and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

<i>Legislation</i>	Mandated Reporters	When must a report be made?	Who is a Child?
<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any person 18 years or older 	<p>A mandated reporter must make a report if t they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years.</p> <p>NB: exceptions may apply.</p>	A person under 16 years old
<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered medical practitioners, midwives and registered nurses • Teachers registered or granted permission to teach under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 	<p>A mandated reporter must make a report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse; • The parents cannot or will not protect the child; and 	A person under 17 years old

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals • Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment. <p>NB: exceptions may apply.</p>	
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INVESTIGATING

- If the DHHS or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation. Any decision to mount an internal investigation will be subject to consideration as to whether it will impede the work of law enforcement agencies.
- Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the Executive Principal will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Executive Principal may decide to conduct such an investigation. The Executive Principal may decide to appoint an Independent Investigator in situations where the complexity of the investigation and/or maintaining procedural fairness might require such an appointment.
- All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.
- Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- The Executive Principal will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.
- After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the Executive Principal shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

RISK MANAGEMENT

- Crest Education will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.
- Crest Education has a Risk sub-committee of the Board which is committed to identifying and managing risks at Crest Education. On an annual basis, the Risk sub-committee members will review child safety and make recommendations to the Board for ways to improve Crest wide child safe practices.

RESPONDING

- If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation’s policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.
- If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation’s policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required, including but not limited to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

PRIVACY

- All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone’s safety. Crest Education will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

- Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

REVIEWING

- Every three years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether Crest Education’s child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation’s care.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- This policy must be read in conjunction with:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant Federal and/or state law ○ Crest Education’s Staff Code of Conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Crest Education’s Child Safe Code of Conduct ○ Risk Management Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff Employment Policy ○ Whistleblower Protection Policy
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AUTHORISATION

Mrs Melinda Izvekov
 Board Chair - Crest Education
 August 2019

STANDARD 3 – CREST CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES, RELEVANT CONTRACTORS AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Ministerial Order 870 states that

The school governing authority must develop, endorse, and make publicly available a code of conduct that:

- (a) has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment;
- (b) sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children;
- (c) takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff), and the needs of all children; and
- (d) is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

As a result, all Crest Education management, staff, relevant* contractors and volunteers at Crest Education are required to abide by this Code.

* In this case, 'relevant' denotes those contractors and volunteers who are likely to have any level of contact and involvement with Crest Education students as part of their work

An inherent requirement for Crest employees is that they profess their own personal faith in Jesus Christ and are willing to live in light of this faith commitment with integrity, honesty and accountability, recognising that the welfare of all children in the organisation is everybody's responsibility. We expect that this faith foundation will provide the basis for all staff seeking to honour the Child Safe standards, policies and practices throughout the organisation. We also expect that this same behaviour will be exemplified by all relevant contractors and volunteers who work with and around children across Crest.

Under the Executive Principal, management will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
3. Nominate Child Safety Officers to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child safety matters.

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Crest Education will:

1. Work towards ensuring the complete safety of all children at Crest;
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
3. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
4. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
5. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
6. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
7. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people;
8. Be professional in their actions;
9. Maintain strict impartiality;
10. Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children;
11. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;

12. Treat students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
13. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
14. Operate within the policies and guidelines of Crest Education
15. Listen and respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
16. Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with a disability
17. Report any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the College's leadership and/or Child Safety Officers
18. Understand and comply with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
19. Ensure as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm, if child abuse is suspected.
20. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context;
5. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
6. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
7. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
8. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
9. Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter;
10. Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with College policy or where required for duty of care purposes;
11. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
12. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
13. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
14. Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse;
15. Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate;
16. Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting;
17. Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.

More specific procedural provisions will be necessary to deal with particular circumstances and difficult situations – for example, sports coaching may legitimately involve some forms of physical contact. This information will be updated and communicated with relevant staff/volunteers/contractors on an 'as needs' basis.



What happens if you breach this Child Safe Code of Conduct

If you breach this Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with Crest Education. At the discretion of the Crest Executive Principal, some matters may be deemed sufficiently serious to warrant referral to the Victoria Police.

Authorisation

Mr Geoff Grace
Executive Principal - Crest Education
August 2019

STANDARD 4 – EFFECTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES TO REDUCE CHILD ABUSE BY NEW AND EXISTING PERSONNEL.

Ministerial Order 870 states that:

- (1) Subject to the requirements of the Education Training Reform Act, the school governing authority must ensure that the school implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this clause.
- (2) Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child-connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
 - (a) the job’s requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
 - (b) the job occupant’s essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
- (3) All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school’s child safety practices (including the code of conduct).
- (4) In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
 - (a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
 - (b) Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - (c) The person’s history of work involving children; and
 - (d) References that address the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.
- (5) The school need not comply with the requirements in Clause 10(4) if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in Clauses 10(4)(a) to 10(4)(d) about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
- (6) The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
 - (a) the induction of new school staff into the school’s policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work; and
 - (b) monitoring and assessing a job occupant’s continuing suitability for child-connected work.
- (7) The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied* that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

*Explanatory note: To be ‘satisfied’, it is not necessary that the school governing authority make each decision about the selection and supervision of school staff engaged in child-connected work. The school governing authority needs to be satisfied about the appropriateness of the school’s arrangements that would regulate or guide other people who make such decisions for or on behalf of the school about child safety matters and child-connected work.

Crest Education makes a commitment to having effective human resources practices which will seek to screen, induct, supervise, train and appraise potential and current staff and volunteers to reduce the risk of child abuse within the organisation.

OVERVIEW

- It is important for organisations such as Crest Education to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse.
- Crest Education shall foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as be aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations. Robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

- To achieve this, Crest shall provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

TRAINING AND INDUCTION

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff should receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will need support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff might need to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

Training and support also promote an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that the organisation meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

Crest staff, relevant contractors and volunteers will be required to commit to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, by signing Crest's Code of Conduct. Training will enhance the skills and knowledge of employees and volunteers and reduce exposure to risks.

Employees, relevant contractors and volunteers working with children need to receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Crest's policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy)
- legislative requirements, such as:
 - obligations to report child abuse,
 - update Mandatory Reporting skills,
 - increase knowledge and understanding of working effectively with students with disabilities,
 - reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and
 - hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including Crest's reporting guidelines
- cultural awareness training.

Training can be formal such as:

- higher education training and accreditation
- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training meeting key objectives.

Training can also be informal such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching.

SUPERVISION

Supervision of employees, relevant contractors and volunteers should be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members should be present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision.

As a matter of good practice, new employees, relevant contractors and volunteers should be supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including Crest’s internal reporting procedures (such as the Child Safety Officer and leadership), the Department of Health and Human Services or Victoria Police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

A proactive performance development strategy will be used to improve employees’, relevant contractors’ and volunteers’ skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance will be measured against Crest’s standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees, relevant contractors and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards must align with those of the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of your organisation and appropriate behaviour.

A RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

Robust recruitment processes help ensure the best applicants are employed. From advertising through to conducting interviews and checking the background of applicants, it is important that each step is done consistently and thoroughly.

This checklist will guide Crest through critical steps in the recruitment process. It includes objectives and examples for:

- A. Selection criteria in job descriptions**
- B. Advertising**
- C. Face-to-face interviews including behavioural-based questions and questions about motives for wanting to work with children**
- D. Working With Children Checks, Police record checks and identity checks (including international police record checks where necessary)**
- E. Reference checks over the telephone with recent line managers**
- F. Probation periods.**

A. Selection criteria

Developing appropriate selection criteria for the position is a valuable first step to reducing the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. It will also ensure that applicants have the specific knowledge and skills required for the position.

Examples of appropriate selection criteria may include:

‘Must have experience working with children.’

‘Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children.’

Do the selection criteria clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant?	
Do the selection criteria outline the supervision and accountability processes in place which support child safety?	

Remember to ensure that the selection criteria provide for the safety of all children. Applicants should have the opportunity to indicate their understanding of, or any experience they have in working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds.

Do the selection criteria include a demonstration of Aboriginal cultural safety and awareness?	
Do the selection criteria include a demonstration of cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds?	
Do the selection criteria include a demonstration of the needs of children with a disability?	

B. Advertising

Planning the advertisement and its placement provides a good opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding children and deter would-be offenders.

Does the advertisement include a message about Crest’s commitment to child safety?	
Does the advertisement include reference to Crest’s Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy?	
Does the advertisement inform applicants that appropriate rigorous reference and background checking will be undertaken, including where relevant Working with Children Check and police record and identity check?	

It is important that Crest be culturally safe for Aboriginal children and encourage participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children. A suggested approach may be:

‘Crest promotes the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and encourages applications from Aboriginal peoples.

Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with Aboriginal children and/or communities.’

Has the job advertisement included a statement about Crest’s commitment to cultural safety, inclusion and empowerment of Aboriginal children, their families and communities?	
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It is important that Crest promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. A suggested approach may be:

‘Crest promotes the safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and encourages applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.

Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.’

Has the job advertisement included a statement about Crest’s commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds?

It is important that Crest promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability. A suggested approach may be:

‘Crest promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children with a disability.’

Has the job advertisement included a statement about Crest’s commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability?	
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C. Interviews

- The interview process is a very important step in selecting the right people for the organisation and in identifying any people who may pose a risk to children. Sufficient time is required to plan and prepare for the interview process and form an interview panel with the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview, ensuring that all panel members are clear on what the position requires.

- An open-ended style of behavioural-based questioning will give an insight into the applicant’s values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. Some useful questions may include:

‘Tell us about why you want to work with children?’

‘Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?’

‘Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?’

Has a list of open-ended questions been prepared which will determine how the interviewee will behave in certain situations?	
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- Notice needs to be taken of the interviewers’ thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant. It is reasonable to ask for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.
- Were any warning signs noted, such as:

• Unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history	
• The applicant says they do not value or ‘need’ supervision	
• The applicant is evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers	

D. **Pre-employment screening**

Screening applicants (including for paid and volunteer positions) is a good tool for helping to prevent people who may abuse children from entering Crest.

Police Checks

- It is important to be upfront and ask the applicant if they have any criminal convictions, formal disciplinary action taken against them, or any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct. This could involve the applicant signing a declaration as part of an application form.
- This could also be covered in a face-to-face interview. Although it may be challenging for the interview panel, particularly if the person is already known, but the applicant’s response should demonstrate a sufficient level of professionalism as well as an understanding of the organisation’s obligations. To help introduce this difficult topic, it could be said to the applicant that there are some specific questions about child safety because the organisation takes child safety seriously.

Has a question been included about whether the applicant has any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal or pending cases, including formal disciplinary action, which may affect their suitability to work with children?	
If addressed during a face-to-face interview, was notice taken of how the applicant responds to questions with regard to his or her words and body language?	
Has a police record check been undertaken (which includes identity check)?	

Working with Children Checks

- Under the *Working with Children Act 2005*, people who are doing child-related work, and who are not exempt, need a Working with Children Check. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers. Full details of the [Working with Children Check process](#) can be found on the Working with Children website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Does the applicant hold a valid Working with Children Check, if required? Has the <u>validity of their Working with Children Check</u> been checked? See online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/checkstatus.doj OR	
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If the applicant does not hold a valid Working with Children Check, and it is required, has the applicant provided evidence that they have applied for a Working with Children Check, and does the organisation have up to date processes to follow up pending applications?	
Has the applicant provided evidence of their Working with Children Check, or evidence of their application for a Working with Children Check?	

Referee checks

- At least two referees need to be spoken to, as this can provide insight into the applicant’s character and skills. Line managers, particularly the most recent, are likely to provide the most accurate reference. Where possible, referees should be contacted who can provide insights into the applicant’s experience working with children.

Do the referees provided by the applicant include line managers who can be objective, rather than colleagues or friends?	
Has the applicant provided their most recent line manager as a referee? If not, have they provided a satisfactory reason?	
Have at least two of the referees been spoken to by telephone? Was the name and position of the applicant confirmed with them?	

When speaking with the referees, establish the referee’s relationship with the applicant, including:

- how long the applicant and referee worked together
- the specifics of the position
- the applicant’s perceived strengths and weaknesses
- whether the referee would hire the person again, particularly in a role working with children, and whether they have any concerns about the applicant working with children.

Referees should be asked directly about any concerns they may have about the applicant working with children. To help introduce this difficult topic, some specific questions could be asked about child safety because the organisation takes child safety seriously.

Take note of any pauses or gaps in the referee’s responses. Ask behaviour-based questions like:

• ‘What did the applicant do when...[for example, they had to comfort a distressed child]?’	
• ‘Do you have any concerns about the applicant’s attitude towards Aboriginal peoples / people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds / people with a disability?’	
• ‘Do you have any concerns about the applicant working with children?’	
• ‘Would you employ this person again?’	

Additional checks

Additional checks will confirm the identity of the applicant and that their responses have been truthful.

Has the identity of the applicant been checked (for example, that their driver's licence/passport has the same name they have provided)?	
Has a certified copy of the applicant's qualifications been seen (if required)?	

Probation periods

Probation periods can help to assess a new staff member's performance and suitability for the job before confirming their permanent employment. If there are any concerns about the person working with children, it should be seriously considered whether they are to remain in the job and the organisation.

The length of probation periods can vary and are usually between three and six months.

It should be considered whether the person should receive closer supervision and additional training throughout the probation period. A probation period can offer an opportunity to set goals with new staff members and identify training, supervision and other support needs.

STANDARD 5 – WHAT TO DO WHEN AN ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE IS MADE.

Ministerial Order 870 states that:

- (1) The school governing authority must have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with this clause and other legal obligations.
- (2) The school governing authority must ensure that the procedure is sensitive to the diversity characteristics of the school community; made publicly available; and accessible to children, school staff, and the wider community.
- (3) The procedure must:
 - (a) cover all forms of ‘child abuse’ as defined in the Education Training Reform Act;
 - (b) apply to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment;
 - (c) identify the positions of the person or people who are responsible for:
 - (i) promptly managing the school’s response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously;
 - (ii) responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse;
 - (iii) monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure; and
 - (iv) managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if the person allocated responsibility under Clause (3)(c)(i) cannot perform his or her role;
 - (d) include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse;
 - (e) clearly describe the actions the school will take to respond to an allegation of child abuse, including actions to:
 - (i) inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting);
 - (ii) protect any child connected to the alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved; and
 - (iii) make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the school’s response to it.
- (4) The procedure must not:
 - (a) prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
 - (b) state or imply that it is the victim’s responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
 - (c) require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
 - (d) prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Crest Education will provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This standard is designed to provide guidance on what to do if a child discloses an incident of abuse, or if a parent/carer raises a concern or allegation of abuse which may have taken place in the organisation.

The following document outlines an appropriate response to a report of alleged abuse. Staff will be trained in how to safely and sensitively manage such disclosures.

In situations where a reasonable belief is formed that a Crest member (employee, contractor or volunteer) has been involved in any form of child abuse – physical, emotional, sexual or neglect – then a report will need to be made by the Executive Principal or delegate to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the allegations made, it may also be necessary to make a report to Victoria Police

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

1. IF A CHILD DISCLOSES AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people at Crest, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the relevant Head of College, Crest Child Safety Officer, Victoria Police or DHHS**.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

2. IF A PARENT/CARER SAYS THEIR CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED IN CREST EDUCATION OR RAISES A CONCERN

- Explain that Crest Education has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as Crest's management or Child Safety Officer, Victoria Police or DHHS**.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

****Department of Health and Human Services**

During business hours – Dandenong office – 1300 555 526

After hours and to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child:

Child Protection Crisis Line (24 hours) 13 12 78

Victoria Police - Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT)

Contact the appropriate local office: Southern Metropolitan (03) 8769 2200

Cultural and Language Barriers

- Staff need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. Staff will need to be sensitive to these

issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

- If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, staff will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Disability Barriers

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident.

General tips for communicating with people with a disability include:

- Speak to a person with a disability as one would speak to anyone else. Speak in an age-appropriate tone. Treat adults as adults.
- If a person with a disability is accompanied by another person such as a carer, address questions directly to the person with a disability.
- Put the person first, not their disability. For example, use the term "a person with a disability" rather than "a disabled person"
- Try to avoid negative phrases such as "suffers from" and "crippled". Use the phrase "people who use a wheelchair" rather than "wheelchair bound".

Communicating with people with physical disabilities

- Remember that a person's personal space can include their wheelchair and crutches. Do not touch or push a person's wheelchair or move their crutches or walking stick without their permission
- When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to find something to sit on in order to be at eye level with them.

Communicating with people with a vision impairment

- When you meet people, who have a vision impairment, always address them by name and introduce yourself by name
- Speak clearly and in a normal voice. There is no need to raise your voice
- Remember that people with a vision impairment cannot rely on the same visual cues as people who do not have a vision impairment. Make sure you verbalise any thoughts or feelings
- If a person is accompanied by a guide dog, do not pat it, feed it or otherwise distract it while it is in a harness. A dog in a harness is working animal
- When you enter or leave a room, say something that indicates your presence or that you are leaving. This ensures that the person who has a vision impairment will not be embarrassed by speaking to an empty space.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

While the Child Safe Standards focus on the entire Crest organisation, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **Failure to Disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to Victoria Police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

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

The **Failure to Protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

Embedding This Standard

Crest Education will

- Continually equip staff and volunteers in how to report and identify signs of risk. Where possible, staff and relevant contractors/volunteers will be directed towards accessible training materials.
- Publicise and make accessible avenues for reporting concerns for children and families
- Institute feedback processes for staff, volunteers, children and families on organisational policies and procedures.
- Ensure children are safe, and that procedures for responding to alleged abuse are fair and focus on child safety, for example by suspending the alleged perpetrator or providing them with alternate duties pending investigation.
- Provide support and comfort to a child reporting abuse or safety concerns, and never blame or interrogate a child.
- Contact parents / carers as appropriate.
- Provide ongoing support (e.g. helping them understand their rights and processes that will follow), and/or make referrals for support (e.g. counselling).
- Review organisational child safe policies and procedures and organisational responses following an incident to help drive continuous improvement.

Latest Updates to Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse – August 2019

On Monday 5 August 2019, the National Office for Child Safety released its Complaint Handling Guide (**the Guide**), developed with the NSW Ombudsman's Office, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the e-Safety Commissioner amongst others. The message is clear – organisations need to be prepared for child safety complaints and allegations. The Guide makes it clear that receiving no complaints is not necessarily an indicator of a child safe environment. Rather, an organisation that empowers individuals, especially children and young people, to raise concerns and then effectively addresses the concerns is better placed to create a child safe environment.

The Guide can be accessed at the following website:

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/nocs-complaint-handling-guide.pdf>

Increasing rates of complaints

An increase in the rates of child abuse reports is being seen across all sectors.

- In 2016-17, the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) received 110,987 reports.
- In 2017-18, it received 115,641 reports.
- Since 2014-15, the number of reports has risen by more than 20%. The Commission for Children and Young People (**CCYP**) received 850 reports in 2017-18 in the first year of the Reportable Conduct Scheme (**the Scheme**). The number of reports for 2018 -19 is expected to be higher.

The increase in the number of complaints is considered to be largely due to an increased awareness of child abuse and the importance of reporting, as opposed to increased rates of child abuse. The introduction of the Scheme has also lead to a broader range of child safety concerns being reported to organisations, including historical allegations and family violence incidents involving their employees. In this environment, if an organisation has not received a child safety concern yet, they should not assume that it cannot happen.

Lack of preparedness

The definition of a child safety concern or complaint encapsulates a range of concerns. Some examples include a complaint about:

- The conduct of an employee towards a child in Crest's care;
- The conduct of an employee towards a child not in Crest's care;
- An historical allegation about the conduct of an employee before they were an employee;
- The way Crest handled a prior complaint;
- Crest's interaction with children; and
- The conduct of another adult or child in relation to a child in Crest's care.

Each type of complaint will trigger different considerations and reporting requirements. Complaints can also be received in a range of ways, including from a child, a parent, a member of the public, another employee, an incident or anonymously. Crest will need to have in place procedures that are flexible to capture different types of complaints but also provide employees with guidance on how to respond in accordance with their child safety obligations.

Key messages of the Guide

The Guide provides a helpful overview of the different considerations that organisations need to be mindful of when responding to complaints. While it is no substitute for an organisation's own tailored complaints procedures and child safety documents, it provides a good starting point.

In particular, the Guide outlines the importance of creating a child-centred approach where the best interests of the child inform Crest's response. This includes putting strategies in place to empower children to raise their concerns and training staff and first responders on how to properly respond. The Guide also sets out nine key guidelines for organisations to consider. These are:

1. Embedding Children's Rights, Safety and Wellbeing into the Complaints Process
2. Reporting Responsibilities
3. Sharing Information and Communicating with Stakeholders
4. Confidentiality and Privacy
5. Managing Risk – Complaints and Incidents
6. Conduct Investigations Involving Children and Young People
7. Being Fair and Objective
8. Explaining Outcomes and Review Options
9. Record Keeping and Complaints Data

It is clear from the Guide that responding to child safety complaints is complex and Crest needs to find the right balance between protecting children, their reporting requirements, the investigation and their employment obligations.

Next steps

The key message is that while it is tempting for organisations to wait until they receive a complaint before they act, it is fundamentally important that organisations are putting in place processes to be prepared for allegations.

Crest will need to continuously improve in this Reporting space by taking the steps below:

1. **Review and implement** – Crest will need to review the current complaints handling process and child safety reporting process. In particular, consideration should be made as to whether the complaints handling process is appropriate for child safety concerns, if the reporting process complies with all legal obligations (particularly reportable conduct schemes) and if their process takes a child-centred approach.
2. **Training** – Aside from general training on Crest policies and procedures, tailored and intensive training should be provided to Child Safety Officers who may be required to make reports to regulatory authorities

and first responders who are most likely to hear complaints. Training should be practical and include relevant case studies.

3. **Empower children** – Crest needs to consider the current strategy for empowering children and if children in Crest’s care understand where to go for help and how to raise a complaint. This is in accordance with best practice and obligations under the Child Safe Standards.
4. **Gap analysis and evaluation** – It is important for Crest to evaluate a response to any reported incidents and identify where the gaps in their policies and procedures are.

CHILD SAFETY INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT DETAILS

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

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

DOES THE CHILD IDENTIFY AS ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER?

No Yes, Aboriginal Yes, Torres Strait Islander

PLEASE CATEGORISE THE INCIDENT

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	

What did you see?	
Other information	

OFFICIAL FOLLOW UP:

Date incident report received by Child Safety Officer:	
Follow-up actions by CSO:	
Date incident report received by Head of College:	
Follow-up actions by Head of College:	
Date incident report received by Executive Principal:	
Follow-up actions by Executive Principal:	

HAS THE INCIDENT BEEN REPORTED?

	Date:	By:
DHHS		
Police		
Another third party (please specify):		

DOES THE INCIDENT REPORTER WISH TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS?

Yes No

STANDARD 6 – CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Ministerial Order 870 states that:

- (1) The school governing authority must develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environments.
- (2) The school's risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.
- (3) If the school governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (**risk controls**).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

- (4) As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school governing authority must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
- (5) At least annually, the school governing authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:
 - (a) individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
 - (b) child abuse risks in the school environment; and
 - (c) the school's current child safety standards.

Crest Education has an important responsibility for keeping children safe. Steps have always been taken to protect children from abuse. More can be done, from a Continuous Improvement perspective to ensure that Crest's risk management strategies meet all the child safety requirements set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

Child Safe Standard 6 requires the school governing authority to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

The following document outlines an appropriate response to this standard. This will be overseen by the entire Crest Board and managed by the Board's Risk Committee, in consultation with senior staff across the organisation. Standard 6 will be implemented through attention to the following five requirements.

Before looking at these five requirements, there needs to be a clear statement on the nature of the Risk Management approach.

WHAT IS A CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

A child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. The strategy outlines how risk is managed, including who is responsible for the process (the school governing authority), and a description of the process itself. The process includes risk assessment, implementation of controls, and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

Managing risk typically involves the following steps and considerations.

1. Identify the school's child safety risks.

- What are the areas of concern or hot spots?
 - What could go wrong?
2. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures or internal controls.
 - What strategies, practices, or procedures are in place to control the risk?
 - Have they been fully implemented?
 - Are staff, contractors, volunteers, parents and students aware of them?
 - How effective are they?
 3. Assess and rate the school's child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.
 - What are the consequences?
 - What is the likelihood of those consequences?
 4. If the risk rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further risk management strategies through additional controls or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then re-assess the risk.
 - What is the 'acceptable level' of risk? For child safety, there should be little or no tolerance of risk.
 - What strategies, practices, or procedures could be put in place to control or manage the risk?

The risk management process will be documented, recorded and reviewed periodically. Effective risk management strategies are dynamic and change over time as new risks arise and others may no longer be relevant.

Requirement 2

Crest’s risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment – Hillcrest, Rivercrest and the Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre, the activities expected to be conducted in each environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Risk Questions	Yes
Does the risk management process consider ‘hot spots’ and ‘hot times’ of student-staff and student-student interactions with respect to child safety?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does Crest have a process that ensures child safety risks of any new or changed physical environments on and off campus are reviewed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does Crest perform screening as part of its staff recruitment process, including for volunteers and contractors? eg WWCC’s ⁴ , criminal background checks, reference checks, psychometric testing etc.*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does Crest monitor who is on the premises? eg visitor and contractor sign-in process, perimeter control.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the risk management process consider child safety risks that may exist in the school environment before, during and after hours, as appropriate? Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classrooms and learning environments • specialist facilities such as libraries, kitchens and computer, music and art rooms • vocational education and training (VET) facilities on campus or off-site • recreation areas, playgrounds, sporting facilities on campus and off-site • staff workplaces and offices • student change rooms and locker areas • transport facilities and locations eg buses, bus stops (excluding public transport) • excursion or camp locations • any other school specific environments. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the risk management process consider child safety risks in the online environment and through media including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • email • Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social media • YouTube • mobile phone SMS messages and other mobile messaging media • telephone, Skype and other media for making voice calls • photography and videography • any other electronic media. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁴ Please refer to the *Working With Children Act 2005* which establishes a process to screen persons engaging or intending to engage in child-related work through a working with children check, and also sets out exemptions from that requirement for volunteers, parents and others.

Risk Questions	Yes
<p>Does the risk management process consider child safety risks regarding relationships and interactions with students among the following people involved with Crest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • registered teachers and educational support staff • welfare staff or those in pastoral care roles relationships with students • other students • administration and support staff • contractors such as specialists delivering services to students eg VET units, music, media or recreation lessons or activities • volunteers • facilities and security staff interactions with students • visitors to Crest or other persons that may have access to students. • homestay environments (particularly for International Students) 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Requirement 3

If the Crest Board identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments, then a record of those risks must be taken along with the action(s) Crest will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

Risk Questions	Yes
Have the identified risks been documented and recorded?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have strategies or the mitigation actions (new internal controls) for the risks been established and documented?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the risk management strategies take into account the diversity of the children that are affected by the risk?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do the risk mitigation actions (controls):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the effort required to abuse • increase the likelihood of detection of inappropriate and/or abusive behaviour • remove triggers for inappropriate and/or abusive behaviour • reduce permissibility of inappropriate behaviour. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does Crest ensure that every person eg whether employee, contractor or volunteer (associated with children), or visitor to the school understands the organisation’s expectations for child safety?	<p>This needs to be developed further</p>

Requirement 4

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the Crest Board must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls. This will need to happen through the Risk Committee of the Board on an annual basis.

Risk Questions	Yes
Does Crest test the effectiveness of internal controls surrounding child safety?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is Crest monitoring its child safety risk management strategies to confirm they have been implemented?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does Crest review the child safety risk management strategies to confirm their effectiveness?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the Crest Board monitor the child safety standard risk management strategies?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the Crest Board evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented mitigation controls?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Requirement 5

At least annually, the Crest Board must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the Crest Board and staff about:

- a) individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
- b) child abuse risks in the school environment; and
- c) Crest’s current child safety standards.

Risk Questions	Yes
<p>Is guidance and training provided to members of the Board and staff about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse • child abuse risks in the school environment • Crest’s current child safety standards. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the outcomes of the risk assessment made available to all relevant people eg staff, students, parents, in line with best practice approaches to increase transparency of the school’s compliance with the child safe standards?	This needs to be developed further

RISK ASSESSMENT

A key part of a risk management strategy is a risk assessment. Risk assessments can take many forms. An example of a common style of risk assessment is provided below. Also provided is an example of a risk rating matrix and some examples of risks and controls.

Examples of Potential Child Safety Risks and Risk Management Strategies

The table below comprises a listing of potential child safety risk and risk management strategies. These lists are not intended to be exhaustive.

Risks	Risk Management Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of an organisational culture of child safety • Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues • Natural trust of long-term employees (who may have developed issues over time) • Children alone with one other person unsupervised • Recruitment of an inappropriate person • Inappropriate behaviour not reported • Harassment via email, SMS or other media • Unsupervised recreational or other activities • Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance) • Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues • Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps • False allegations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy • Child safety code of conduct • Child safety reporting procedures • Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors • Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour • Counselling and other resources • CCTV for unsupervised areas, and 'hot spot' areas • Clear windows in walls to enable visibility of occupants • Non-lockable doors in hot spots • Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks • Supervision or monitoring of activities • Online searches (Google, Facebook etc) • Performance management procedures • Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety • Criminal history checks and confirming currency of WWCC/VIT registration • Psychometric testing

Example Risk Assessment Template

RISK RATING		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Below is an updated Crest child safety risk assessment approach that has been used to identify risks and document child safety risk management strategies.

Risk Event	Existing Management strategies or internal controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk assessment	New risk management controls or internal controls	Who is responsible?	Residual risk
No organisational culture of child safety- child abuse tolerated, hidden from public.	Child safety code of conduct, embedding culture of child safety	Unlikely	Severe	High	Staff induction and annual awareness training, inclusion of obligation in staff position descriptions, policy and procedure for managing child safety, performance management procedures, reporting procedures	Executive Principal and Board Chair	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person – inappropriate behaviour	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Criminal history search, online searches (Google, Facebook etc), pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety	Executive Principal	Low
Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues	An understanding amongst staff that student wellbeing and safety is a high priority; prior understanding of Mandatory Reporting laws	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Ongoing communication about the seriousness of not abiding by Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislation will further strengthen the culture of reporting	Executive Principal	Low
Natural trust of long term employees (who may have developed issues over time)	Ongoing modelling and mentoring by colleagues; awareness of the need for ongoing vigilance with regards to child safety	Unlikely	Major	Medium	The introduction of Reportable Conduct through the CCYP has strengthened the accountability structures	Executive Principal	Low

Child alone with one other person unsupervised	Wherever possible ensure that staff and students are not 1:1 unless there is line of sight accountability by others (eg Music Lessons, Chaplaincy meetings)	Likely	Moderate	High	Reinforce the need for additional vigilance in these matters when students are 1:1 with a staff member – either physically or online. Review such arrangements and associated risks	Executive Principal	Low
Inappropriate behaviour not reported	It is unlikely that this would happen however one of the issues still needing to be clarified is the threshold of reporting – when is a matter serious enough to report to a senior member of staff or directly to authorities?	Unlikely	Major	Medium	The additional work being done to ensure that all staff complete annual Mandatory Reporting modules should minimise the risk of under reporting of substantive matters of concern	Executive Principal	Low
Harassment via email, SMS or other media	There is an awareness of the pervasive nature of online bullying and harassment as well as the risks of inappropriate online communication between staff and students	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Ongoing communication about Crest policies and VIT expectations with regards to appropriate forms of online communication will be needed to keep this risk issue as low as possible	Executive Principal	Low
Unsupervised recreational or other activities	This is one of the more significant issues in a school environment and one which needs ongoing discussion and awareness.	Possible	Major	High	We need to ensure wherever possible that students are not placed into unnecessarily risky environment and that they are taught (Std 7) how to speak up if they feel unsafe	Executive Principal	Medium
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	Any contractors on site need to sign in. If they are going to be directly (or indirectly) involved with children, they will need to have a current WWCC	Unlikely	Major	Medium	If there is a reasonable risk of the contractor coming into contact with students, then the Contractor Code of Conduct needs to be signed in addition to the WWCC	Executive Principal	Low
Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues	Staff have had some training in how to best support Students With Disabilities and some staff have had additional training in assisting students with mental health challenges.	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Staff need to be vigilant about their personal and professional boundaries when working with ALL students, in particular those who might have their own boundary issues – physically, emotionally and socially	Executive Principal	Low
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	It is important that there is a prior commitment to checking the Child Safety commitment of any venue or campsite before finalising the booking	Likely	Major	High	It is mandatory that only Child Safe organisations are allowed to be places where we send students. This needs to be a part of the Risk Assessment process for any new/repeat booking	Executive Principal	Low
False allegations	Staff need to be careful when interacting with students at all times. This is particularly so that the truthfulness of any allegations can be tested by evidence where possible	Unlikely	Major	Medium	The basis for Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct to the CCYP is that a ‘reasonable belief’ is formed. This is more than hearsay and not as strong as ‘beyond reasonable doubt’. In this process, false allegations will hopefully be shown for what they are	Executive Principal	Low

STANDARD 7 – STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN

Ministerial Order 870 states that:

- (1) The school governing authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about: standards of behaviour for students attending the school; healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality); resilience; and child abuse awareness and prevention.
- (2) The school governing authority must promote the child safety standards required by this Order in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Crest Education will seek to ensure that children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. There will need to be simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. These processes will need to be regularly reviewed as part of a Continuous Improvement approach to making sure that Child Safety is kept prominently in the view of the entire Crest community. As such, all staff and volunteers need to have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

Rationale

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. Crest Education will have simple and accessible processes assisting children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

Benefits of empowering and supporting the participation of children

- Participation and empowerment are vital components of a child safe organisation that benefits children, families, organisations and staff.
- Involving and consulting with children enables Crest to improve its policies, practices and services as children provide a unique voice regarding what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- Facilitating the empowerment and participation of children enhances a culture of child safety and listening to children within your organisation.
- Children and young people learn new skills, build self-esteem and develop an understanding of collaboration and rights.
- Children are more likely to report abuse or concerns if they feel safe and empowered in the organisation.
- Children feel their views are valued and listened to. Children are more likely to support the outcome if they have been involved.
- It is critical that there is genuineness in our approach to children and follow through on what we say we will do – credibility needs to be earned and can be easily lost.

To implement this standard, Crest will:

- Provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. For example, information could be included in welcome packs, information sessions and posters, as well as on websites and social media.
- Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children, for example by having policies and procedures that are able to be accessed and understood by children with a disability.

- Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children and for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Consider access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.
- Gather feedback from children, for example through surveys, focus groups, story time and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implement improvements based on this feedback.
- Enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. For example, views could be gathered through suggestion boxes, surveys and feedback sessions
- Ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops.
- Train relevant staff and volunteers on methods of empowering children and encouraging children’s participation.
- Ensure Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other organisational activities, such as organisational planning and decision making.
- Raise awareness in the community about children’s rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites and newsletters.

Successfully implementing this standard will result in Crest Education having:

- Reporting procedures are accessible for all children for when a child feels unsafe
- Children who understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- Children who understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
- Children who feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- Children who feel empowered to contribute to the organisation’s understanding and treatment of child safety
- Children’s reports of concern responded to appropriately
- Staff who understand how to empower children and encourage their participation.

An Action Plan – August 2019

Planned Action	Rationale	Responsibility	Time frame

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD SAFETY OFFICER

While it will be expected that all staff (particularly teaching staff) will be equipped and willing to be a 'go to' person for students who need to talk about a child safety issue, it will also be vital that at least one Child Safety Officer be appointed in each section of Hillcrest and Rivercrest and also at the Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre.

It will be most likely that the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinators at Hillcrest and Rivercrest will be trained as the main Crest Child Safety Officers. At the Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre, the expectation is that the Equestrian Manager will fulfil this role, given the part time nature of other contractors.

In addition, each section will form its own Child Safety team where the Chaplain, Registrar and Learning Support Co-ordinator would form an ideal sectional team with the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator as the team leader under the auspices and direction of the Executive Principal.

CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS (CSOs)

Employees and volunteers are being supported through the appointment of sectional Child Safety Officers with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel.

This will assist Crest in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with Crest's legal requirements and policies and procedures.

A designated Child Safety Officer also provides a single contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with your organisation.

As such there will be CSOs appointed in each of the key Crest educational precincts:

- Hillcrest Primary
 - Hillcrest Secondary
 - Rivercrest PYP
 - Rivercrest MYP
 - Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre
- These CSOs will receive additional training and will be involved in meetings at least twice per year with the Executive Principal to discuss matters related to child safety across the organisation.
 - In addition, the CSOs will meet at least twice per year with the Executive Principal and other key staff in their sectional team as outlined above, to discuss specific issues and initiatives around child safety.
 - The CSOs will be members of the broader Child Wise Community and be given opportunity to participate in webinars and other PD events

BROAD AREAS OF THE CSO ROLE ARE TO:

Provide authoritative advice

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
- Liaise with the Executive Principal, Head of College and other College leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety.
- Help to lead the development of the College's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

Raise awareness

- Ensure the College's policies are known and used appropriately.
- Ensure the College's Child Safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
- Ensure the Child Safety policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.

Train

- Being authoritative in providing advice by keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years including regular Child Safety webinars and other PDs when available and accessible.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the College's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.

CHILD PROTECTION FACT SHEET

Introduction

Crest Education is committed to providing a caring, safe and accepting environment for students. All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe.

Crest Education is committed to child safety. We have zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse.

Rationale

All adults have a responsibility to care for children and to protect them from any kind of abuse or neglect. Crest is responsible to provide a safe environment for children and to provide an education which fosters their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity. We are entrusted by parents with the care of their children, who are precious in the sight of God.

Types of Child Abuse

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing. The younger a child is, the more vulnerable they are and the more serious the consequences are likely to be.

Types of child abuse include:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Emotional and/or physical neglect
- Medical neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Family Violence
- Risk-taking Behaviour

RESPONDING TO A REPORT OF HARM

If a child tells you about harm, you need to be well prepared so that you can be supportive of the student and clear about your responsibilities at the same time. The Crest community has a duty of care to take immediate action.

The person to whom the child has disclosed should:

- Actively listen to the student and never probe for details or ask leading questions;
- Reassure the child that they haven't done anything wrong;
- Talk gently and reassuringly, pointing out you are there to help;
- Where the harm is taking place outside the school's control, never assure the student that the harm will stop as that cannot be guaranteed;
- Do not make promises that you will not tell anyone; in fact, you should disclose that you have a responsibility to tell the Child Safety Officer, Head of College or the Executive Principal.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE CONCERNS?

- You need to be aware of the indicators of child abuse.
 - Document your concerns including any behavioural observations you have had with the child or young person, using the Child Safety Incident Report
 - If anyone reports actual or suspected abuse you should report this immediately to the relevant Child Safety Officer or directly to the Executive Principal or a Head of College at Crest Education
- Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe.



FOR SENIOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The teachers and other support staff at Hillcrest are here to make sure that you feel safe at school at all times. We also are here to hear from you if you have some things outside of school which are worrying you.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

If you are worried about your safety, for you or someone you know, there are people you can talk to. It's a good idea to talk to an adult you trust about any concerns you have. That person might be a parent or relative, a teacher, or someone who works at school. You may want to talk to more than one person about your concerns.

IF YOU SEE HARM OCCURRING, YOU CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:

Help the student who has been harmed, for example:

- By telling other students to move away
- Get a teacher or co-ordinator involved as soon as possible
- Tell them straight away about what you saw
- If possible, write down what you saw and give them the information.

WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

There are services that you can contact to access more information, and in some cases, to speak to somebody about your concerns.

National Child Abuse Helpline (Child Wise) Phone: 1800 991 099

This is a toll-free number with access to expert advice from trained counsellors and an opportunity to speak up about child abuse.

Kids Helpline Phone: 1800 551 800

For any time and for any reason – a free, private and confidential phone and online counselling 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Headspace (National Youth Mental Health Foundation) Phone: 1800 650 890

Headspace can help if you are aged 12 or over and you are going through a tough time. You can talk to someone at Headspace on the phone, online or in person. They are online at: <http://headspace.org.au>

WHO ARE THE CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS AT HILLCREST?

1. Mr Keith Chow (Primary)
2. Mrs Kerry McCracken (Secondary)

All students have a right to feel safe and to be safe.



FOR JUNIOR AND MIDDLE PRIMARY STUDENTS

All children have a right to feel safe and be safe



All the teachers and staff at Hillcrest are here to make sure that you feel safe. We want you to tell us if there is anything at school or outside of school that is worrying you.

Who can I talk to?

If you are worried about your safety or the safety of another person we want you to tell an adult you trust. That adult might be a parent or relative, a teacher or someone who works at school.

At Hillcrest you could talk to any teacher, our chaplain Mel, or Mrs Anderson. You can talk to more than one person if you would like.



Mr Chow is the Primary School Child Safety Officer.



Who else might help?

You could also call an adult on the telephone to talk about what is worrying you:

Kids Helpline - Phone: 1800 551 800

Child Wise - Phone: 1800 991 099



Hillcrest is a child safe school

FOR MYP STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The teachers and other support staff at Rivercrest are here to make sure that you feel safe at school at all times. We also are here to hear from you if you have some things outside of school which are worrying you.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

If you are worried about your safety, for you or someone you know, there are people you can talk to. It's a good idea to talk to an adult you trust about any concerns you have. That person might be a parent or relative, a teacher, or someone who works at school. You may want to talk to more than one person about your concerns.

IF YOU SEE HARM OCCURRING, YOU CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:

Help the student who has been harmed, for example:

- By telling other students to move away
- Get a teacher or Co-ordinator involved as soon as possible
- Tell them straight away about what you saw
- If possible, write down what you saw and give them the information.

WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

There are services that you can contact to access more information, and in some cases, to speak to somebody about your concerns.

National Child Abuse Helpline (Child Wise) Phone: 1800 991 099

This is a toll-free number with access to expert advice from trained counsellors and an opportunity to speak up about child abuse.

Kids Helpline Phone: 1800 551 800

For any time and for any reason –free, private and confidential phone and online counselling 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Headspace (National Youth Mental Health Foundation) Phone: 1800 650 890

Headspace can help if you are aged 12 or over and you are going through a tough time. You can talk to someone at Headspace on the phone, online or in person. They are online at: <http://headspace.org.au>

WHO ARE THE CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS AT RIVERCREST?

1. Mrs Caron Lane (MYP)

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe.

All children have a right to feel safe and be safe

All teachers and staff at Rivercrest are here to make sure that you feel safe at school at all times. They are also here to listen if you would like to talk about something outside of school which is worrying you.



Who can I talk to?



If you are worried about your own safety or the safety of someone else you know, there are people you can talk to. It's a good idea to talk to an adult you trust about things that are worrying you. That person could be a parent, family member, a teacher or someone who works at our school.

At Rivercrest you can either talk to your teacher, our chaplain, Mr Dan, Mrs Anderson, Mrs Johnson, Dr Cafini, Mrs Perros or Mrs Naude.

Who else might help?

You can also call Child Wise or Kids Helpline to speak to someone who can also help you and give you advice.

National Child Abuse Helpline (Child Wise)
Phone: 1800 991 099



Kids Helpline Phone: 1800 551 800



Rivercrest is a child safe school

FOR VET EQUINE STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre is an important part of Crest Education. As an organisation we are committed to child safety and have a zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse. The teachers and other support staff at the Equestrian Centre are here to make sure that you feel safe at all times. We also are here to hear from you if you have some things outside of school which are worrying you.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

If you are worried about your safety, for you or someone you know, there are people you can talk to. It's a good idea to talk to an adult you trust about any concerns you have. That person might be a parent or relative, a teacher, or someone who works at school. You may want to talk to more than one person about your concerns.

IF YOU SEE HARM OCCURRING, YOU CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:

Help the student who has been harmed, for example:

- By telling other students to move away
- Get an Equestrian trainer or Mrs Ward involved as soon as possible
- Tell them straight away about what you saw
- If possible, write down what you saw and give them the information.

WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

There are services that you can contact to access more information, and in some cases, to speak to somebody about your concerns.

- **National Child Abuse Helpline (Child Wise) Phone: 1800 991 099**
This is a toll-free number with access to expert advice from trained counsellors and an opportunity to speak up about child abuse.
- **Kids Helpline Phone: 1800 551 800**
For any time and for any reason –free, private and confidential phone and online counselling 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
- **Headspace (National Youth Mental Health Foundation) Phone: 1800 650 890**
Headspace can help if you are aged 12 or over and you are going through a tough time. You can talk to someone at Headspace on the phone, online or in person. They are online at: <http://headspace.org.au>

WHO IS THE CHILD SAFETY OFFICER AT THE AYR HILL EQUESTRIAN CENTRE?

1. Mrs Lauren Ward (Equestrian Centre Manager)

All students have a right to feel safe and to be safe.

Useful Links and Resources

Australian Government Department of Social Services. (2016, April).

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Retrieved from: www.cryp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf

Commonwealth of Australia (2014, June).

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Interim Report Volume 1.

Retrieved from www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/about-us/our-reports

CompliSpace Pty Ltd. (2016, March).

The New Victorian Child Safe Standards: A radical shift in your school's child protection obligations.

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Department of Health and Human Services. (2015a, December).

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Department of Justice and Regulation. (2015, August).

Failure to disclose offence. Retrieved from

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

Department of Justice and Regulation. (2015, August).

Failure to protect: a new criminal offence to protect children from sexual abuse. Retrieved from

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Betrayal of Trust Implementation. Retrieved from

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Magarey, K. (2013). The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and related inquiries.

Parliamentary Library Briefing Book: Key Issues for the 44th Parliament, Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from

www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook44p

Our Community Pty Ltd. (2016, January). Child Protection Toolkit: What every not-for-profit organisation must do NOW.

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School Governance. (2016, March) Child Protection Revolution: Are You Ready? Retrieved from

www.schoolgovernance.net.au/video-1/.

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority. (2016, February). VRQA Child Safe Standards Readiness Tool. Retrieved

from www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/documents/readiness.pdf

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal

The term 'Aboriginal' in this guide is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Child

The words 'child' and 'children' in this guide refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child abuse

For the purposes of this document, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:

- physical violence
- sexual offences
- serious emotional or psychological abuse
- serious neglect.

It includes all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds

A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child safety

In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.

Child safe organisation

In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Children with a disability

A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

Organisation

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as:

- an incorporated body or association
- an unincorporated body or association (however structured)
- an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child is in need of protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury”,
- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

- A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- Professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or

Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused

For further explanation or definitions please refer to the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2, found at [http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubPDocs_Arch.nsf/5da7442d8f61e92bca256de50013d008/ca257cca00177a46ca257ee40013d5e6/\\$FILE/581078exi1.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubPDocs_Arch.nsf/5da7442d8f61e92bca256de50013d008/ca257cca00177a46ca257ee40013d5e6/$FILE/581078exi1.pdf)

STAFF AND CONTRACTOR* DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE TO CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

I, _____, have read and understood the Crest Child Safe Code of Conduct in relation to Crest's commitment to providing a child safe environment for all students at all times.

I agree to completely abide by the expectations and requirements of this Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- FROM SEPTEMBER 1st 2016, ALL FUTURE EMPLOYMENT AND INVOLVEMENT BY STAFF, CONTRACTORS* AND VOLUNTEERS WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE SUBMISSION OF A SIGNED CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT.

In addition, all Crest staff and contractors* will be required to have read and understood the following sections of the Crest Child Safe standards:

1. Standard 2 – Child Safe Policy
2. Standard 5 – Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse
3. Standard 7 – Empowering Children

I, _____, have read and understood Standards 2, 5 and 7 of the Crest Child Safe standards.

I agree to completely abide by the expectations and requirements of these sections of the Child Safe Framework.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

WHEN COMPLETED, PLEASE RETURN TO MRS JOANNE BALL, CREST HR/OHS MANAGER EITHER IN HARD COPY OR AS A SCANNED PDF DOCUMENT

* Those contractors whose role is to work directly or indirectly with students

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe.

CREST VOLUNTEER DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE TO CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

I, _____, have read and understood the Crest Child Safe Code of Conduct in relation to Crest's commitment to providing a child safe environment for all students at all times.

I agree to completely abide by the expectations and requirements of this Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- FROM SEPTEMBER 1st 2016, ALL FUTURE EMPLOYMENT AND INVOLVEMENT BY STAFF, CONTRACTORS AND VOLUNTEERS WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE SUBMISSION OF A SIGNED CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT.

When completed, please return to Mrs Nicola Buchanan, Executive Assistant to the Executive Principal, either:

in hard copy

OR

as a scanned pdf document, emailed to nicola.buchanan@cresteducation.vic.edu.au

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