

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy – Student Use



Date **July 2022**

Review **July 2023**

1. Purpose

At Lauriston Girls School the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy puts student safety at the centre of everything we do. All Lauriston students have the right to feel safe and be safe. Our programs, policies and practices help to ensure that every Lauriston student is protected from harm.

This document outlines the obligations of everyone in our school community to act safely and appropriately towards our students of all ages, in accordance with the eleven Child Safe Standards. This includes teachers, volunteers, coaches, administration, maintenance staff and contractors, whether or not they work directly with our students. It covers the physical and online environment, during and outside of school hours.

2. Cultural Safety for Aboriginal children

We aim to create an inclusive and welcoming physical and online environment for Aboriginal children and their families. We provide information and training for staff and students about Aboriginal culture and identity. Racism in our school is identified, confronted and is not tolerated.

3. A commitment to child safety and wellbeing

At Lauriston, a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the school. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in everything we do. Our annual training for teaching and non-teaching staff, our policies and our staff support materials, ensure that all Lauriston staff understand their responsibility for the safety of our students and what their own behavioural standards, responsibilities and processes need to be in order to keep our students safe. Before taking students on camps, excursions, trips and tours, staff complete a risk assessment to ensure the safety of the students taking part in these programs.

4. We take student participation and empowerment seriously

Our students are informed about their rights, including their right to information, safety and participation. We know that friendships are important and that friends can help each other to feel safe and more connected. Our programs, such as Peer Support, SHINE, SRC, House and lunchtime clubs and interest groups, encourage cross-age friendships and the development of positive relationships with peers.

We teach our students in an age-appropriate way, about how adults and students are expected to behave within our school and how to express safety concerns they may have for themselves, their peers or their

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friends. We teach our students how to ask for help and access support services, or raise a complaint for themselves, their friend or peer.

We listen to our students and actively seek their input through surveys and focus groups on a range of matters including policy development, teaching and learning in the classroom, the co-curricular program, uniform and leadership opportunities.

5. We involve our families and community

Our families are informed about child safety and wellbeing and involved in the decisions we make. Our families have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and helping children to raise any concerns. To help our families we provide them with information about our policies and processes. Our families and the broader school community, such as the Old Lauristonian Association and the Lauriston Parents Association, are invited to have a say in the development and review of our policies and practices concerning child safety.

6. We celebrate diversity and equity

We celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and we promote respectful environments free from discrimination. We focus on wellbeing and growth for all. We understand that our students have diverse circumstances and we provide support to those in need and respond to those who are vulnerable.

We pay particular attention to the needs of students with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to love at home and lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex children and young people. Students with diverse needs have access to information, support and complaints processes that are safe easy to understand and accessible. For example, the provision of uniform options such as shorts and pants, unisex toilets and change facilities, and the adoption of gender-neutral pronouns and preferred names, ensure all students feel safe and included in our community.

7. Our staff are suitable and supported

All staff working at Lauriston are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. We emphasise child safety and wellbeing in our recruitment and reference checking processes when hiring new staff and ensure that all staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or the equivalent background checks.

8. Child focussed complaints system

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Sometimes students, parents or members of the wider community have complaints or concerns to raise. We welcome the reporting of concerns and we commit to respond to complaints promptly, thoroughly and fairly, and to take immediate action to protect any students at risk.

Our student-friendly Complaints Policy explains what students can do if they have a child safety and wellbeing concern or complaint to raise.

9. Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

Our staff and volunteers are provided with the knowledge skills and awareness to keep our students safe. Child safety and wellbeing training is provided to all staff on regular basis and child safety matters are a standing item at staff and management meetings. Training includes recognising signs of harm in children, how to respond to disclosure of harm by children, information on how to build a culturally safe and inclusive environment for our students and how to respond to racism.

10. Safe physical and online environments

The physical and online environments for our students promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for our students to be harmed. We identify and reduce risks without compromising our students' right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. Our policies, such as the Student and Staff Codes of Conduct, the Student Use of Technology Policy and the Social Media Policies for staff and students, ensure our online and physical environments promote the safety and wellbeing of all our students. We teach our students about being safe online and we maintain our physical environment to be safe and attractive.

11. Regular review of our child safe policies and practices

We regularly review and improve our policies and practices, to ensure that we are responding to our diverse and dynamic student population. We invite students, families and the community to have input into this review process and we welcome their feedback. Any complaints, concerns or safety incidents are discussed at the weekly Executive meeting to understand what caused the problems and to see if we need to change our practices to stop this from happening again.

12. Documenting policies and procedures

Our policies and procedures address the Child Safe Standards, they are documented and accessible on our website and Schoolbox to staff, students, families and the community. They are easy to understand and provided in student-friendly language, as appropriate.