

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



Date **April 2024**

Review **April 2026**

Part 1: Overview

Purpose:

The Lauriston Girls' School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organization where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope:

This policy:

- Applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to School Council members where indicated.
- Applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use and those provided through third-party providers.
- Should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and codes.

Definitions:

Child: a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse: Child abuse includes:

- a) Any act committed against a child involving:
 1. A sexual offence.
 2. Grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1985.
- b) The infliction, on a child, of:
 1. Physical violence.
 2. Serious emotional or psychological harm.
- c) The serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects.

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Child Abuse (emotional): emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health.

Child Abuse (physical): physical child abuse is any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. It can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking or burning and assault with implements and female genital mutilation.

Child abuse (sexual): child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity. Sexual offences are governed by the Crimes Act 1985 (VIC).

Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme: these schemes provide authorized organization, including Victorian schools, with an expanded ability to share confidential information with other authorized services to promote the wellbeing or safety of children or to assess or manage family violence risk.

Child Safety: includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

Child-connected work: this means:

- a. Work authorized by the school and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
- b. For the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorized by the school in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably likely to be present.

School environment: any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours.

- a. A campus of the school.
- b. Online or virtual school environments made available by the school for use by a child or student (including email, intranet system, software applications, collaboration tools and online services).
- c. Other locations provided by the school or a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps and approved homestays.

School Boarding environment: for the purposes of Lauriston Girls' School this refers to the Year 9 Howqua campus where students receive accommodation and reside on the campus for periods of five weeks across the school year.

School staff: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- a. Directly engaged or employed by Lauriston Girls' School.
- b. A contracted service provided engaged by the school to perform child-related work.

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School boarding premises staff: an individual working in a school environment who is

- a. Directly engaged or employed by Lauriston Girls' School.
- b. A contracted service provided engaged by the school to perform child-related work.

School governing authority: the governing body for a school as authorized by the ETR Act.

School governing body: the body responsible for the governance, conduct or management of the school.

Student: a person who is enrolled or at attends the school.

Volunteer: a person who performs work without remuneration of reward for the school.

Statement of commitment to child safety:

Lauriston Girls' School is a child safe organization which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected and their voices heard about decision that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. Their relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff and volunteers to inform ongoing strategies.

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Roles and responsibilities:

School leadership team

Our school leadership team comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal-Wellbeing, Vice Principal- Head of Junior School and Vice Principal- Howqua campus, along with senior staff including Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principal - Student Wellbeing and Experience (Howqua), Director of Kindergarten (ELC) and School Psychologists are responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal, Executive and Senior Leaders will:

- Ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed.
- Model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing.
- Enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered.
- Reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students.
- Promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.
- Facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse; and
- Create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers will:

- Participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.
- Act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting obligations as set out in our school policies.
- Ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives; and
- Implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School Council will:

- Champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community.
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at School Council meetings.
- Undertake annual training on Child Safety.
- Approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

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- When appointing members of the School Council and its sub-committees, ensure that selection and management practices are child safe; and
- Delegate employment of school staff to the Principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities:

Our School Principal, Deputy Principal-Wellbeing, Vice Principal - Head of Junior School, Director of Kindergarten (ELC) and Vice Principal- Howqua campus are the first points of contact for child safety concerns and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- Our School Principal, Deputy Principal- Wellbeing and Vice Principal- Head of Junior School are responsible for monitoring compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Any employee or member of our School Community should approach these people if they have any concerns about the School's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.

Our School Executive meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Executive provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our School Executive and School Council Risk Management committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct:

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing:

At Lauriston we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for excursions and trips,

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off-site camps which may include adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our School Executive will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Lauriston, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

- Adopt measures to racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated.
- Address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences.
- Ensure school policies, procedures and practices create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal students and their families; and
- Provide staff, students and the school community with training to support them in acknowledging and appreciating with strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students.

Student Empowerment:

To support child safety and wellbeing at Lauriston, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through our School Values, the Student Code of Conduct, Respectful Relationships curriculum and Personal development curriculum.

We inform students of their rights through our Child Safety and Wellbeing policy, our personal development curriculum and our whole school approach to respectful relationships and give them the skills and confidence to recognize unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can access information on how to report concerns through the Lauriston Girls' School SchoolBox and on the School website.

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When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Family engagement:

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Lauriston we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- Parent surveys which will be placed on SchoolBox, and SchoolBox Digest communications will be sent to parents.
- The School Council Innovation and School Community Engagement sub-committee will seek parent input on training programs and offer forums for engagement on Child Safety policies and practices.
- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available on SchoolBox and the School website.
- SchoolBox Digest communications will inform parents and the school community about any significant updates to our child safe policies, strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- Child Safe materials will be posted around the school.

Diversity and equity:

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people.

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- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- children and young people with disabilities.
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence.
- international students; and
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Engagement policy, Inclusion and Diversity policy and LGBTIQ+ policy provide further information about how our school supports diversity and equity.

Suitable staff and volunteers:

At Lauriston we apply a robust child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment:

When recruiting staff members Lauriston undertakes:

- Interviews.
- Reference checking which includes child safe questions.

In addition, when recruiting staff to perform child-related work, we:

- Sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration.
- Collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - the person's history of working with children;
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children; and
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Staff Induction:

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- the Child Protection Policy including mandatory reporting.
- the failure to disclose policy and procedures.
- any other child safety and wellbeing information the School Executive considers appropriate.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff:

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

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Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by an annual interview with individual staff members by a member of the School Executive, including evidence of attendance at ongoing school training and confirmation each individual has familiarised themselves with child safe policies and procedures.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers:

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness:

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- Our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices.
- Completing training and/or online modules on mandatory reporting, failure to disclose and child protection.
- Recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students.
- Responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm.
- How to build culturally safe environments for children and students.
- Information sharing and recordkeeping obligations; and
- How to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our sport coaches, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

School Council training and education:

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually.

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Training includes guidance on:

- Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse.
- Child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment.
- Lauriston Girls' School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

Complaints and reporting process:

Lauriston Girls' School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaints and Grievances Policy which can be found on our school website and on SchoolBox.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers and homestay providers must follow our Child Safety reporting obligations. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

Communications:

Lauriston Girls' School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child protection (mandatory reporting) Policy and Procedure.
- Displaying Child Safety material around the school.
- Updates in our SchoolBox Digest for parents.
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

Privacy and information sharing:

Lauriston Girls' School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to our school's Privacy Policy.

Records management:

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing.

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Review of child safety practices:

At Lauriston Girls' School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- Review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident.
- Analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice.
- Act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

Part 2: Standards Implementation

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

Child Safe Standard 1: *Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls' School:

- Creating an inclusive and welcoming physical and online environment for Aboriginal children and their families.
- Encouraging and supporting students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights through curricular and co-curricular programs.
- Recognising the right of students and their families to identify as Aboriginal and not challenging their identity.
- Providing training and support to staff and students to have awareness and insight into their own attitudes towards expressions of Aboriginal culture and identity.
- Ensuring that racism within the school is identified, confronted and not tolerated.
- Our school values, policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

This can be seen though:

- Our enrolment process invites families to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander if they choose and ensures that families feel welcome within the school community.
- Our understanding that family is often more broadly defined within Aboriginal culture, community including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews and other members of the community who are considered to be family and ensuring invitations to participate in school events are open to all members of the family.

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- At school events such as assemblies, music events and meetings our teachers, students and school leaders commence with an acknowledgement of country. When appropriate, the School will and invite a local elder to conduct a welcome to country.
- The inclusion of the acknowledgment of country in school email signatures and in other school publications such as handbooks, the Lauristonian and Lauriston Life.
- Our curriculum strives to support students in their development of intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others.
- Our support of our student led Reconciliation Committee, which organises events to celebrate Reconciliation Week and the ongoing development of our Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Our student and staff policies which identify racism as unacceptable at the school and how instances of racism will be addressed. These policies include the Anti-Discrimination Policy, Code of Conduct for Staff, Contractors and Volunteers, School Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention, the Student Behaviour Guidelines and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Our Kindergarten curriculum includes activities which develop an understanding of Aboriginal culture and community.

A commitment to child safety and wellbeing

Child Safe Standard 2: *Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School:

- A public commitment to child safety.
- A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the school from the top down and the bottom up.
- Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and all associated policies, at all levels of the school.
- A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards, responsibilities and processes.
- Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

This can be seen through:

- All staff must read and sign the Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- All volunteers and visitors must read and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct on sign-in at reception.

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- Staff, School Council and families are provided with Child Safety Standards professional development annually.
- Staff and volunteers are provided with professional development regarding their information sharing and record keeping obligations.
- New members of staff are inducted on child safety on commencement of their employment.
- Our commitment to child safety is on the school website, in our printed publications such as prospectuses and handbooks, and other relevant school documents.
- Child safety and wellbeing is a standing item on the weekly School Executive meeting agenda and in the weekly Staff Briefings for Senior School, Howqua Campus, Junior School, and Kindergarten.
- Risk management is completed for all incursions, excursions, camps, trips and tours to ensure the safety of our students.
- Child safe policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated. They are available on our school website.
- Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are created, maintained and disposed of by Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

Taking child participation and empowerment seriously

Child Safe Standard 3: *Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School:

- Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- Children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention and support programs and services, and to relevant related information, in an age-appropriate way.
- Staff and volunteers are informed and attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Our school has strategies in place to develop and imbed a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to input from our student.
- Our school provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and is responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

This can be seen through:

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- Our holistic and age-appropriate student wellbeing programs where children's and young people's rights to safety, information and participation are explicitly taught.
- Our commitment to the Respectful Relationships program in the Senior School.
- Our Peer Support and House programs across the Junior and Senior Schools, which encourage cross-age friendships and the development of positive relationships with peers.
- Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct policy are produced in age-appropriate and child friendly versions and are easily accessible to students online and in print.
- Students are explicitly taught about how adults and students are expected to behave within our school and how to express safety concerns they may have for themselves, their friends or peers.
- Student voice and agency is encouraged and supported in all classes and programs across the school, including the co-curricular programs, student led clubs and interest groups and student leadership opportunities, which foster our students' confidence, engagement, participation and contributions.
- Our Student Representative Councils (SRC) in Junior School and Senior School provide an avenue for student feedback, innovation and input into their learning environment and safety.
- Students are taught how to seek help and access support services, or raise a complaint, for themselves, their friends or peers and have identified more than one trusted adult at the school from whom to seek this help.
- Our student behaviour policies including the Student Code of Conduct Policy, the Student Discipline Policy, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and the Senior School Student Behaviour Expectations Policy, are reviewed and revised by the SRC and discussed with students in tutor groups at the start of each year.
- Age, setting and subject appropriate classroom protocols are agreed upon by teachers and students.

Involving families and communities

Child Safe Standard 4: *Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School

- Families participate in decisions that impact their child.
- Families and communities are given information about the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and relevant information is accessible.
- Families and communities are invited to have a say in the development and review of the school's policies and practices.
- Families, carers and the community are informed about the school's operations and governance.

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This can be seen through:

- Our school's approach to child safety is easily accessible on the school website and availability to school policies and procedures is through Parent Central on Schoolbox and through the Lauriston website.
- Our Individual Difference (ID) team provides families of identified students with collaborative input and are included as part of the decisions process of establishing the goals and strategies for their child's learning within the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- ILP's are reviewed at a minimum annually, or more frequently as required, with family input included in each review. The strategies identified are shared with the student's classroom and subject teachers and with the student herself, in an age-appropriate manner.
- Senior Secondary students are assisted by the ID team and the VCE and IB Coordinators, in making Special Provision applications to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Inclusive Access Arrangements through the International Baccalaureate Organisation and Special Entry Access Scheme consideration by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre.
- Through our team around the student approach and case management team process families assist in decision making around behaviour support plans and interventions that may be required or advised by internal and external allied health services.
- The school conducts whole school parent surveys and whole school staff surveys to gain feedback and evaluate programs and practices in the school.
- Families and the community are informed of the school's governance and operations through our Schoolbox Newsfeeds, the School's Strategic Plans, the website, the Lauriston Life bi-annual publication and our annual Community Report.

Respecting equity and diversity

Child Safe Standard 5: *Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School

- The school, staff and volunteers, understand that children and young people have diverse circumstances and provide support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- Children and young people at the school have access to information, support and complaints processes that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- The school pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- The school pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides a culturally safe environment for them.

This can be seen through:

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- The school's Anti-Discrimination Policy, Diverse Learner Policy, Inclusion Policies for Blairholme and Kindergarten, Languages Policy and Student Engagement Policy.
- The adoption of preferred pronouns and names for students who identify as non-binary.
- The provision of a range of school uniform options for all students, including the choice of winter pants and summer shorts, as an alternative to a dress or skirt.
- The provision of unisex toilets and changing facilities for students.
- A culture in which students are free to identify as LGBTQI+ without fear of discrimination or bullying from teachers and peers.
- The provision of lunchtime clubs and interest groups established to support and explore diversity, such as the PRIDE Club.
- A comprehensive enrolment process through which families are invited to provide the school with the necessary information to ensure each student's individual physical, social and learning needs are understood and accommodated as far as is reasonable.
- Staff professional learning for teachers on identifying and responding to children with diverse circumstances and needs.

Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported

Child Safe Standard 6: *People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School:

- Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasis child safety and wellbeing.
- Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- Ongoing supervision and people management is focussed on child safety and wellbeing.

This can be seen through:

- All teaching staff are required to have current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, ensuring their professional and ethical credentials are clearly visible to the community.
- Non-teaching staff and volunteers are required to have a valid Victorian Working with Children Check card.
- The recruitment process for any role within the school includes a check of an individual's suitability to work with or near children and young people and reflects child safe practices.

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- Our job advertisements and careers website make explicit our school's commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing.
- All referees are asked a series of questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children, and the child safe standards.
- All candidates are asked a question around child safe standards at interview.
- New staff must agree to the Child Safe Code of Conduct as part of signing a new contract.
- Staff and the School Council receive annual professional development on Child Safety, and all staff must complete the mandatory report module and provide their certificate of completion to HR.
- All visitors to the school must read our Child Safe Code of Conduct on entering the school as part of the sign in process.
- VIT cards are copied and stored on file for all teaching staff and renewals of VIT registration are monitored via the VIT public register.
- The reporting of Working with Children Checks is online from the Department of Justice and we receive notifications online as people register.
- At commencement of employment, staff are asked for a copy of their current WWCC which is added to their paper file.
- New staff and volunteers to the school receive induction on the school's policies and procedures and obligations towards reporting information sharing, confidentiality and ensuring the safety of students.
- Our school policies of student wellbeing, duty of care, visitors/volunteers, mandatory reporting and our school wide behaviour management procedures ensure child safety and wellbeing.

Child-focused complaint systems

Child Safe Standard 7: *Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School

- Our school has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligation to act and report.
- Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- The school has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperates with law enforcement.
- Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



This can be seen through:

- Our school has a Complaints, Grievances and Concerns Policy for staff, parents and the community that is available through Schoolbox.
- A verbal complaint or grievance will be acknowledged and recorded by the School's representative at the time of communication of the complaint or grievance.
- A written complaint or grievance will be acknowledged in writing by the School's representative within three working days.
- A timeline will be agreed upon for investigating and resolving the complaint or grievance.
- The school ensures all staff follow policy and procedures that align to privacy, reporting and legislation. It is also a requirement that teachers do this to maintain full registration with the VIT.
- Decisions about a complaint will be made with the best interests of the student at the core, ensuring the school provides a safe and secure learning environment that promotes a positive climate for learning.

Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

Child Safe Standard 8: *Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School:

- Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people and responding to disclosures.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe, inclusive environments for children and young people and responding to racism.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information about children's rights.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information on record keeping risk assessment and external reporting obligations.

This can be seen through:

- The school's provision of annual staff training with child safe standards and the requirement for all staff to complete compulsory online training for mandatory reporting through child protection.
- A child safe standards update is a standing agenda item for staff briefings, weekly School Executive Meetings and School Council meetings.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



- Volunteers are kept up to date with policies and procedures relating to child safe and wellbeing.
- The Executive, school leadership and school psychologists provide information, training and support to staff and volunteers who disclose harm. Staff are also provided regularly with information about the EAP and supporting the wellbeing of themselves and others.
- Through our professional learning programs and schedules, staff receive training through presentations and professional reading on how to build culturally safe environments that are inclusive and engaging.

Safe physical and online environments

Child Safe Standard 9: *Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School:

- Our staff identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- At Lauriston Girls School the online environment is used in accordance with the School's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices.
- The school's risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities and the physical environment.

The school contracts facilities and services from third parties who have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

This can be seen through:

- Our staff and students ICT user agreements identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments.
- Our range of student and staff policies, including but not limited to, the Student and Staff Codes of Conduct, the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy, the Student Use of Mobile Phones Policy, the Social Media Policies for Staff and Students and the Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy, ensure our online and physical environments promote the safety and wellbeing of all students.
- Staff are trained annually on the breadth of their duty of care to students, extending to yard duty rosters, excursion protocols and appropriate locations and protocols for meeting one-on-one with students in the school physical environment and online during remote learning.
- Risk management processes occur for all incursions, excursions, camps and tours and are conducted by the staff responsible for the activity.
- Risk management is conducted for all contracts, facilities and services provided by third parties to ensure they comply with our commitment to child safe standards.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



- Lauriston students are explicitly taught about being safe online and the risks and problems they may face. This is taught through the academic curriculum and the student wellbeing programs in an age-appropriate manner.
- Our physical environment is well maintained, attractive and promotes positive wellbeing. The grounds are kept safe by secure fences and buildings that minimize the opportunity for students to be harmed.

Review of child safe policies and practices

Child Safe Standard 10: *Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.*

How we address this at Lauriston Girls School:

- The school regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- The school reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families, and children and young people.

This can be seen through:

- Our Child Safe and Wellbeing policies and practices are reviewed on an annual basis or sooner as needed.
- All policies and procedures have a regular review period indicated in the document.
- The School Executive and staff ensure they are up to date in practices and adopting evidence-based research to support our students and families.
- Safety incidents are logged through an online incident report form and reviewed by the OHS Committee and the School Executive on a regular basis.
- Complaints, concerns, safety incidents or significant breaches of policies are tabled at the weekly Executive Meeting to understand what caused the problem and where improvements can be made.
- Reporting of information and findings is done to all stakeholders in the school community through a range of means such as weekly staff briefings, school staff meetings, Schoolbox newsfeed items, school publications, email communication, student assemblies and year level meetings, and parent meetings.

Documenting policies and procedures

Child Safe Standard 11: *Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



How we address this at Lauriston Girls School:

- Our policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- Our policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- Lauriston Girls School uses best practice models from ISV, VRQA and DET and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- Our School Executive and School Council champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

This can be seen through:

- The school's policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and address all the standards. The policies are available to staff, students and parents through our intranet, Schoolbox.
- The school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy sets out the school's expectations, practices, and approach in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards.
- Our Code of Conduct sets out expectations for behaviour and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.
- The school's risk assessment and management plans address risks of child abuse and harm.
- The school's complaint handling policy and processes address how the school will respond and all internal and external reporting obligations.
- The school's organisational recruitment, human resources and volunteering policies have a clear child safety focus.
- The school's procurement policies ensure the safety of children and young people.
- The Lauriston Girls School policies and procedures are role modelled by the School Executive and the school community is supported to ensure they are embedded into day-to-day operations.
- Professional learning and updates are provided throughout the year to ensure staff and volunteers understand the implementation of the policies and procedures.

Related Policies and Procedures:

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures and codes. These include:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Child Protection Policy

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



- Student Engagement Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Policy status and review:

The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers.