



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting and Responding Obligations Policy

Policy designation	PO022BD0326-24	Policy audience	Public Facing
Approval date	17/03/2026	Document owner	Principal
Released to audience	11/05/2026	Version	4.0
Review date	17/03/2028	Approval authority	Board - Delegated to Risk & Compliance Committee

### Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

*All children and young people who come to Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School ("Strathcona") have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.*

*We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm (including discrimination and racism) and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.*

*The School regards its child safety and wellbeing responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.*

*Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually, and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do, and every decision that they make.*

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Strathcona meets its obligations under the Victorian Child Safe Standards ("Standards") and Ministerial Order 1359 ("MO 1359"), and that child safety incidents and concerns are identified, reported and responded to promptly in a manner that prioritises student safety and wellbeing.

This policy sets out:

- the School's expectations for recognising and responding to child safety incidents and concerns
- internal reporting requirements
- key external reporting obligations under Victorian law; and
- the requirement to document actions taken and provide appropriate support.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff members and other workers, including but not limited to:

- employees (teaching and non-teaching, ongoing, fixed term and casual)
- volunteers
- contractors and service providers.

This applies regardless of the frequency of work or volunteering, or whether the role involves direct contact with students.



This policy applies in all school environments, including but not limited to:

- school campuses
- school approved activities and events (including camps, excursions and sporting events)
- online and virtual environments authorised or provided by the School
- third-party provider environments used for school programs (including, but not limited to approved homestay accommodation, registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers and other schools).

## Definitions

Unless otherwise stated, terms used in this policy have the same meaning as those defined in the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#) and in relevant Victorian child safety legislation.

## What is a Child Safety Incident or Concern?

Child safety incidents or concerns can take many forms. At Strathcona, a child safety incident or concern includes:

- all definitions of child abuse or other harm in various legislation, and the key indicators of child abuse and other harm, which are set out in the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- breaches of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Codes of Conduct.

The nature of child abuse and other harm is complex. Abuse or other harm may occur over time and potential indicators are often difficult to detect. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, other family member, staff member, volunteer, contractor, another adult or even another child.

Legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse or other harm vary depending on the circumstances of the child safety incident or concern.

## Policy Statement

The School is committed to ensuring that:

- all child safety incidents and concerns are identified, reported and responded to promptly and appropriately
- when responding to any child safety incident or concern, the safety and wellbeing of the student is the paramount consideration
- all staff members and other workers to whom this policy applies act on child safety incidents and concerns, report internally in accordance with this policy, and comply with all applicable legal obligations to report to external authorities
- the School's reporting and responding arrangements:
  - do not discourage external reporting
  - do not require staff to assess the truth of disclosures
  - do not place responsibility for formal or statutory reporting to external authorities on students
- nothing in this policy prevents any person from taking immediate action to protect a student or from notifying Police or Child Protection where this is necessary to ensure a student's safety



- all of the School's procedures for reporting and responding to child safety incidents or concerns are designed and implemented taking into account the diverse characteristics of the School community.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities relevant to child safety and wellbeing at the School in general are set out in the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#), available on the School's public website.

The following roles have additional responsibilities under this policy.

### Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- maintaining a child-safe culture
- responding appropriately to disclosures or indicators of abuse or other harm
- reporting child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with this policy
- complying with applicable legal reporting obligations
- making and maintaining accurate records of actions taken.

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers

Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers are responsible for:

- receiving internal reports
- providing assistance and advice to staff about reporting and response obligations
- ensuring that the School takes seriously, escalates, reports and responds to all child safety incidents or concerns
- supporting risk management and student support planning
- coordinating the School's response as authorised by the Principal
- monitoring implementation of this policy.

The names of the School's currently appointed Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers are published on [Maple](#).

### Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the School has effective systems for reporting and responding to child safety incidents and concerns and for ensuring compliance with this policy and applicable legislation.

The Principal may authorise appropriate delegates to undertake responsibilities under this policy but remains accountable for its implementation.

### Principal's Delegate

Where the Principal is unavailable, or where a matter involves the Principal, the Deputy Principal - Learning and Teaching or the Principal's delegate is responsible for performing the Principal's responsibilities under this policy.



## Reporting and Responding Framework

While this policy is titled Child Safety and Wellbeing **Reporting and Responding** Obligations Policy, the School applies the Victorian Government **PROTECT Four Critical Actions** as the operational framework for [Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) and for [Student Sexual Offending](#), when responding to child safety incidents and concerns.

This means that **immediate response to student safety always comes first**, followed by reporting, communication and support.

Staff must apply the PROTECT Four Critical Actions whenever they become aware of a child safety incident or concern.

### The PROTECT Four Critical Actions

All child safety incidents and concerns must be managed in accordance with the following four steps:

1. Respond Immediately
2. Report
3. Communicate
4. Provide Support

As a workflow, in simple terms, this means:

- **Respond** to keep student safe → **Report** internally immediately → **Follow** leadership guidance

Staff are not required to determine which legal or reporting obligation applies. Internal reporting will ensure that appropriate action is taken. Further detail about external reporting obligations and legislative requirements is provided in the appendices listed below:

- [Appendix 2: Legal Reporting Obligations](#)  
(Mandatory Reporting, Failure to Protect, Failure to Disclose and related legislative requirements)
- [Appendix 3: External Reporting Authorities](#)  
(DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, SSR, VIT and The Orange Door)
- [Appendix 4: Student Sexual Behaviour and Student Sexual Offending](#)  
(including the Sexual Behaviour Practice Model and reporting considerations)
- [Appendix 5: Organisational Duty of Care and Governance Context](#)  
(Wrongs Act obligations, reasonable precautions and record-keeping requirements)

A more detailed summary of the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and how they operate at Strathcona is provided in [Appendix 1: The PROTECT Four Critical Actions in Operation at Strathcona](#).



### **Consideration of Diverse Student Needs**

When responding to child safety incidents or concerns, the School recognises that students may experience and disclose harm differently, and that responses must be inclusive, culturally safe and responsive to individual circumstances.

In applying the PROTECT Four Critical Actions, the School will take into account the diverse needs and backgrounds of students, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- students with disability or additional needs
- students who are unable to live at home
- overseas students
- students who may be otherwise vulnerable.

This includes ensuring that responses:

- prioritise student safety and wellbeing
- are respectful of cultural identity, communication needs and lived experience
- do not create additional barriers to disclosure or support
- are informed by appropriate advice, support services and regulatory guidance where required.

Consideration of diverse needs forms part of the School's organisational duty of care and governance responsibilities and is addressed further in [Appendix 5: Organisational Duty of Care and Governance Context](#).

### **Raising and Escalating Child Safety Incidents or Concerns**

Child safety incidents or concerns may be raised by students, parents/carers, family members, community members or staff (including volunteers and contractors).

**Students** may disclose a child safety incident or concern to **any staff member** or through other child-focused reporting pathways made available by the School, including anonymous options.

**Parents/carers and community members** may raise child safety concerns through the School's published child safety and complaints pathways.

**All staff** must act and raise any child safety incident or concern involving students internally whenever they:

- witness a child safety incident or concerning behaviour
- receive a disclosure
- have any concern about the safety or wellbeing of a student.

Internal reports must be made as soon as possible to:

- the Principal, a Child Safety and Wellbeing Champion or Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer; or
- where the concern involves the Principal, the Deputy Principal - Learning and Teaching or the Principal's delegate.



Where external reporting is required, this will usually be coordinated by the Principal, their delegate, a Child Safety and Wellbeing Champion or a Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer.

Internal reporting or consultation within the School does not replace or delay any obligation to make a report to an external authority. Staff must act in accordance with this policy and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions.

### **Record Keeping**

All child safety incidents, concerns, reports and actions taken must be recorded using the approved **PROTECT templates** below and provided to the Risk, Compliance and Policy Manager for registering onto the Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Register.

- [PROTECT - Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse](#) (pdf)
- [PROTECT - Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse](#) (MS Word)
- [PROTECT - Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: Template for all Victorian Schools](#) (pdf)
- [PROTECT - Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: Template for all Victorian Schools](#) (MS Word)

These templates are also available on the policy page on [Maple](#).

These records will be maintained in accordance with the School's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Record Keeping Policy* and Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) standards.

### **Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Student**

Any concerns about the wellbeing of a student, regardless of whether it has been caused by abuse or other harm, will be taken seriously and acted upon.

The School and its staff members owe a duty of care to all students at the School to ensure that they feel safe and are supported at the School.

Concerns about the wellbeing of a student, that do not appear to be the result of abuse or other harm, may still require internal escalation, referral or external reporting, depending on the age of the student and the nature of the concern. This may include reporting concerns to:

- a Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer
- Victoria Police
- Child Protection
- Child FIRST/the Orange Door.

Where appropriate, the School will also consider whether a referral to internal or external support services may assist in meeting the student's wellbeing needs.



## Privacy and Confidentiality

All information relating to child safety incidents or concerns must be handled sensitively, confidentially and securely. Information must only be disclosed or discussed with those who are directly involved in managing the situation, or where disclosure is otherwise required or permitted by law.

Reports or referrals made to DFFH Child Protection, The Orange Door or Victoria Police are confidential, and the identity of the reporter is generally protected by law, subject to limited legal exceptions.

A person who makes a report or referral in good faith in accordance with this policy and applicable legislation will not be held liable for the outcome of any investigation.

The School manages personal and sensitive information in accordance with its privacy, information sharing and record keeping policies, and relevant legislative requirements.

## Implementation

The School implements this policy through its child safety governance and operational systems, including:

- **Staff induction**, ensuring all new staff understand their reporting and responding obligations, the PROTECT Four Critical Actions, internal reporting pathways and the School's Child Safe Program.
- **Ongoing staff training**, including regular updates, briefings and annual refreshers on child safety reporting obligations, legal requirements and procedures.
- **Communication to the School community**, including publication of this policy and related child safety information on the School's public website and intranet.
- **Student-accessible information**, including age-appropriate, culturally safe and accessible resources that explain how students can seek help or report concerns.
- **Regular review of implementation effectiveness**, through routine monitoring by the Principal's delegate to ensure the policy is operationalised consistently and in accordance with MO 1359.

The School makes all necessary child safety guidance, templates and supporting documents accessible on official platforms - ensuring transparency, awareness and compliance.

## Breach

Failure to comply with this policy may result in action being taken by the School.

Where a breach of this policy is identified, the School may respond in accordance with its relevant policies, procedures and contractual arrangements, taking into account the nature and seriousness of the breach.

Nothing in this policy limits the School's ability to take appropriate action to meet its duty of care, or any person's obligations under civil or criminal law.



## Policy Review

The School Board has strategically delegated aspects of its child safety and wellbeing policy review responsibilities to the School executive team, to support operational efficiency in policy development, while retaining ultimate oversight and approval authority for the Child Safety and Wellbeing Program.

All policies and procedures that make up the Child Safety and Wellbeing Program will be reviewed by the relevant approval authorities (School Board or executive team) **at least once every 2 years** or earlier if required, such as if a significant child safety incident occurs at the School or due to changes in legislation.

## Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	27.09.2021	Phong Pham	Approved as "Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse"
2.0	21.04.2022	Phong Pham	Updated Child Safety Officer List
3.0	25.05.2023	Phong Pham	Approved as "Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy"
4.0	17.03.2026	Phong Pham	Approved as "Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting and Responding Obligations Policy"



## Appendix 1: The PROTECT Four Critical Actions in Operation at Strathcona

Below is a guidance summary of the PROTECT Four Critical Actions in operation at Strathcona. It is not intended to reproduce the detailed operational guidance contained in PROTECT. It should be used by staff as a quick reference guide only.

### Critical Action 1: Respond Immediately

If a student has been harmed or is at immediate risk of harm, staff must take prompt action to ensure the student's safety. This may include:

- calling 000 for urgent police or medical assistance
- separating people involved where appropriate
- preserving evidence where it is safe to do so (environment, clothing, physical items, potential witnesses)
- notifying the Principal, a Child Safety and Wellbeing Champion or another Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer as soon as possible, with escalation to the Principal as required.

All staff have a duty to take reasonable steps within their role to reduce or remove risks to students.

### Critical Action 2: Report

#### Internal reporting (always required)

Staff must report internally if they:

- witness a child safety incident or concerning behaviour; or
- have any concern about the safety or wellbeing of a student.

Reports must be made to:

- a Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer or the Principal; or
- if the concern involves the Principal, to the Deputy Principal - Learning and Teaching or the Principal's delegate.

#### External reporting

Depending on the circumstances, reports may also need to be made to one or more external authorities.

Where an external report is required, this will usually be coordinated by the Principal or a Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer. Staff should, where applicable, consult with a Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer first before making any external reports.

Refer to [Appendix 3: External Reporting Authorities](#) and the table below for further details.

External authority	When a report may be required
<b>Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection</b>	Where there is a belief on reasonable grounds that a child may be in need of protection, at risk of significant harm, or in need of therapeutic treatment due to sexually abusive behaviours.
<b>Victoria Police</b>	Where there is a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child, where a serious criminal offence may have occurred, or where there is an immediate risk to a student's safety.



<b>External authority</b>	<b>When a report may be required</b>
<b>The Orange Door</b>	Where there are significant concerns about a child's wellbeing or family violence, but the matter does not meet the threshold for reporting to DFFH Child Protection.
<b>Social Services Regulator (SSR)</b>	Where there is an allegation that an employee may have engaged in Reportable Conduct.
<b>Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)</b>	Where there are concerns about the fitness to teach of a registered teacher that require notification to the regulator.

### Critical Action 3: Communicate

Parents/carers are usually informed of child safety incidents or concerns unless doing so would:

- place the student or another person at risk; or
- compromise an investigation by Police or DFFH Child Protection.

Where external authorities are involved, advice must be sought before contacting parents/carers. All communication must prioritise student safety and wellbeing.

### Critical Action 4: Provide Support

The School will provide appropriate support to:

- students affected by a child safety incident or concern
- families, where appropriate
- staff members involved or impacted.

Support may include wellbeing planning, counselling, supervision or learning adjustments, and referrals to external services.



## Appendix 2: Legal Reporting Obligations

The table below summarises the key legal reporting obligations under Victorian law that may apply to staff and the School in relation to child safety incidents and concerns. It is intended as a reference resource only and does not replace the [Reporting and Responding Procedures](#) set out in the main body of this policy.

Staff are **not required to determine which legal obligation applies** before reporting concerns internally.

Legal Obligation	Who it applies to	When the obligation arises	Relevant legislation	Authoritative Guidance
<b>Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection</b>	Mandatory Reporters, including principals, teachers, school counsellors/psychologists, registered medical practitioners and nurses, and people in religious ministry	When, in the course of professional work or duties, a belief on reasonable grounds is formed that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse and the parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child	<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	<a href="#">Vic Gov (DFFH) - Mandatory Reporting</a>
<b>Failure to Disclose (Reporting sexual offences to Police)</b>	All adults	When a reasonable belief is formed that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child aged under 16, subject to limited legal exceptions	<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i>	<a href="#">Vic Gov (DJCS) - Failure to Disclose</a>
<b>Failure to Protect</b>	Persons in positions of authority, care or supervision within the School, including school leaders and governing authorities	When a person in authority knows of a substantial risk of a sexual offence against a child under 16 by an adult associated with the School and negligently fails to reduce or remove that risk	<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i>	<a href="#">Vic Gov (DJCS) - Failure to Protect</a>
<b>Reportable Conduct Scheme</b>	The head of the School (the Principal) and the School as an organisation	When an allegation is made that an employee has engaged in reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct	<i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	<a href="#">SSR - Reportable Conduct</a>



Legal Obligation	Who it applies to	When the obligation arises	Relevant legislation	Authoritative Guidance
<b>Reporting teacher misconduct to the VIT</b>	Registered teachers and the School	When certain criminal charges, convictions, findings or conduct matters arise that may affect registration or a teacher's fitness to teach	<i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i>	<a href="#">VIT - Conduct Reporting Guide for schools</a>
<b>Non-mandatory reporting and wellbeing pathways</b>	Any person	When there are significant concerns about a child's wellbeing, family violence, or therapeutic treatment needs that do not meet mandatory reporting thresholds	<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i> and related frameworks	<a href="#">Vic Gov (Schools) - Responding to other concerns about the wellbeing of a child</a>



## Appendix 3: External Reporting Authorities

### Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) - Child Protection

**Role:**

DFFH Child Protection is the statutory authority responsible for responding to children who are believed to be in need of protection from abuse or neglect, or where there are serious concerns for a child's safety, stability or development.

**Website:**

<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection>

**Contact:**

After-hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 131 278  
General DFFH enquiries: 1300 475 170

East Division: 1300 360 452

East Division covers the following areas and LGAs:

Alpine, Benalla, **Boroondara**, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Knox, Manningham, Mansfield, Maroondah, Mitchell, Moira, Monash, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Whitehorse, Wodonga, Yarra Ranges.

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### Victoria Police

**Role:**

Victoria Police is responsible for responding to emergencies, investigating criminal offences against children (including sexual offences), and enforcing Crimes Act reporting offences.

**Website:**

<https://www.police.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse>

**Contact:**

Emergency: 000  
Local police station (non-urgent): 131 444

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### Social Services Regulator (SSR)

**Role:**

The SSR oversees the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including receiving notifications and monitoring organisational responses to reportable conduct allegations. It replaced the regulatory oversight previously held by the Commission for Children and Young People from 23 February 2026.

**Website:**

<https://www.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme>



**Contact:**

Reportable Conduct Scheme enquiries: 1300 310 778

**Report:**

Notifications under the Reportable Conduct Scheme are made to the Social Services Regulator via the secure online reporting portal available on its [website](#).

**Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)**

**Role:**

The VIT regulates teacher registration and suitability, including receiving notifications and complaints about teacher conduct and fitness to teach.

**Website:**

<https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/conduct/complaints>

**Contact:**

VIT enquiries: 1300 888 067

**The Orange Door**

**Role:**

The Orange Door is the Victorian Government's access point for family violence services and child and family wellbeing support, including matters that do not meet mandatory reporting thresholds.

**Website:**

<https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/>

**Contact:**

Box Hill Office: 1800 354 322

Other Office locations: <https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/contact-us>



## Appendix 4: Student Sexual Behaviour and Student Sexual Offending

### Age-appropriate sexual behaviour

Children and young people may display developmentally expected and age-appropriate sexual behaviour as part of normal growth and learning, which does not ordinarily involve harm or exploitation.

Authoritative guidance on identifying age-appropriate behaviour is provided through Victorian Government student wellbeing resources.

### Problem sexual behaviour

Problem sexual behaviour refers to sexualised behaviour that is concerning, inappropriate for a child's developmental stage, or may cause harm to themselves or others, but does not meet the threshold of a sexual offence.

Key points:

- children under 10 years of age cannot commit a sexual offence under Victorian law
- problem sexual behaviour in younger children requires support, assessment and intervention
- responses focus on safety planning and wellbeing supports, rather than criminalisation.

Victorian Government guidance provides specific direction for responding to problem sexual behaviour in children under 10.

### Student sexual offending

Student sexual offending refers to sexual behaviour by a student aged 10 years or over that may amount to a sexual offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

This may include, but is not limited to:

- sexual assault
- indecent acts
- other unwanted sexualised touching
- conduct occurring at school, during school activities, or outside school hours where there is a connection to the School environment.

Victorian guidance clarifies that:

- consent under Victorian law is age-dependent and capacity-based
- sexual behaviour between students may still constitute sexual offending even where both students are minors
- schools must act whenever an incident is witnessed, disclosed or suspected.

Schools must respond in accordance with the Four Critical Actions for Schools - Responding to Student Sexual Offending.



For the purposes of this policy, student sexual behaviours are distinguished at a high level as follows:

Age-appropriate sexual behaviour	Problem sexual behaviour	Student sexual offending
Developmentally expected	Developmentally inappropriate or concerning	May constitute a sexual offence under law
Mutual and non-coercive	May cause harm or distress	Engages formal reporting obligations
Addressed through education and supervision	Requires assessment and wellbeing supports	Requires response under the Four Critical Actions

Examples of age-appropriate sexual behaviour, problem sexual behaviour and student sexual offending are provided in the Victorian Government guidance and are not reproduced in this policy.

In practice, the School may use recognised professional frameworks (such as the Traffic Lights® framework) to support staff understanding and judgement when responding to sexual behaviours in students. The use of such frameworks does not replace the School's obligations to act in accordance with this policy, the PROTECT Four Critical Actions, or applicable legal reporting requirements.

Further information is available at:

[Identify and respond to student sexual offending \(PROTECT - Schools Vic\)](#)

### Relationship to reporting obligations

Concerns relating to student sexual behaviour may engage multiple legal and regulatory obligations, including:

- mandatory reporting
- reporting to Victoria Police
- therapeutic treatment reporting
- Reportable Conduct Scheme considerations
- duty of care obligations.

The applicable reporting pathway depends on the nature of the behaviour, the age of the students involved, and the level of risk or harm.

Legal reporting obligations are summarised in [Appendix 2](#), and external authorities are listed in [Appendix 3](#).



## Appendix 5: Organisational Duty of Care and Governance Context

This appendix provides a high-level overview of the School's organisational duty of care and the governance framework within which child safety and wellbeing obligations are managed.

This appendix should be read in conjunction with:

- this policy
- [Appendix 2: Legal Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Appendix 3: External Reporting Authorities](#)
- [Appendix 4: Student Sexual Behaviour and Student Sexual Offending](#)

Together, these documents describe how the School discharges its duty of care through governance oversight, policy settings, procedures and training, consistent with Victorian law and regulatory expectations.

### Organisational duty of care

Schools and school staff owe a legal duty of care to students. This duty requires the School and its staff to take reasonable steps to protect students from reasonably foreseeable risks of harm, including risks of child abuse, while students are under the School's supervision.

Key characteristics of organisational duty of care include:

- the duty is non-delegable, meaning the School retains responsibility even where activities or services are provided by third parties
- the duty may extend beyond school hours and off-site, where there is a sufficient connection to School activities
- multiple staff may hold concurrent duties of care, with responsibilities varying according to role and context.

### Child safety and duty of care

The duty of care owed by schools is closely linked to obligations under the Child Safe Standards, which require schools to take active steps to prevent, identify and respond to child abuse and other harm.

Victorian law requires schools to implement systems and practices that:

- minimise risks of child abuse by individuals associated with the School
- provide appropriate supervision and safeguards
- respond appropriately to incidents, disclosures and concerns
- embed child safety and wellbeing in everyday practice and decision-making.



### Governance responsibilities

Under MO 1359, schools are required to ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

This includes governance arrangements that:

- support a culture of no tolerance for child abuse
- ensure policies and procedures are approved, implemented and reviewed
- provide clear lines of accountability for child safety and wellbeing
- oversee the identification, management and review of child safety risks
- ensure compliance with registration requirements and regulatory expectations.

For non-government schools, such as Strathcona, compliance with MO 1359 and the Child Safe Standards is monitored by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as part of school registration requirements.

### Shared responsibility

Child safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility across the school community. While the School Board and senior leadership hold overarching governance responsibility, all staff, volunteers and contractors have a role in:

- acting consistently with child safety policies and codes of conduct
- identifying and raising concerns
- contributing to a culture that prioritises student safety and wellbeing.