



OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Glen Eira College is committed to child safety. All students, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

We want students to be safe and empowered in an inclusive environment. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously, consistent with our policies and procedures.

Glen Eira College is committed to:

- preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and/or reducing these risks
- ensuring human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers are consistent with DET policy
- regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
- Complying with our legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are concerned about a student's safety
- the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the cultural safety of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTI students and to providing a safe environment for students with a disability

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

The Principal, Assistant Principals and the Student Wellbeing Leader are responsible for leading the development of a culture of child safety and are the first point of call for concerns regarding student safety.

Please refer to the Glen Eira College 'Mandatory Reporting and Child in Need of Protection Process' found in the Staff Handbook and on the school website (<http://gec.vic.edu.au/>).

OUR STUDENTS

This policy is designed to empower students who are vital and active members of the Glen Eira College community. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote respect, diversity and tolerance at Glen Eira College, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of LGBTI students
- ensure that students with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This policy applies to and guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with students in our organisation. All of our staff and volunteers must abide by the applicable DET and VIT codes of conduct and Glen Eira College policies and procedures which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with students.



CHILD SAFE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES AT GLEN EIRA COLLEGE

1. Training and supervision

- Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- We aim to ensure all staff and volunteers feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns with the Principal, Assistant Principal or Student Wellbeing Leader.
- We ensure appropriate PD and resources are available to ensure our staff are able to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- All registered teachers undertake annual Mandatory Reporting DET Professional Development Online Learning modules and Assessment.

2. Recruitment

- The quality of the workforce is the major factor driving improvement in schools. The Department supports a culture of leadership, learning and renewal in all workplaces with opportunities for career development and advancement. Excellent service provision can only happen when the right people are attracted, recruited, developed and supported to do their jobs as effectively as possible. We take all reasonable steps to employ highly skilled professional people to work with students.
- We follow the DET guidelines in relation to recruitment. Glen Eira College understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- All people engaged in child-related work at Glen Eira College, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check before commencing work.

3. Fair procedures for personnel

- The safety and wellbeing of students is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.
- We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.
- If there is an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised we ensure that those who made the report are advised of the action taken consistent with our legal and moral obligations

4. Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or students, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

5. Legislative responsibilities

Glen Eira College takes our legal responsibilities seriously. The Victorian legislative procedures provide penalties for:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** staff and volunteers will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.



- Failing to mandatory report: Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, principals and police) must comply with their duties. For GEC personnel this is outlined in the GEC Mandatory Reporting Policy.

6. Risk Management

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, out of bounds areas), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a GEC student on social media).

7. Allegations, concerns and complaints

Glen Eira College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to ensure allegations, concerns or complaints are investigated thoroughly and quickly by the appropriate people and in line with DET policies and procedures referenced below.

We ensure all staff know the procedures to follow as outlined in the Staff Handbook through written communication and through staff briefings and professional learning.

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident as per the GEC mandatory Reporting Policy. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

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

DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OR GUIDELINES

- Student Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- DET Policies / Guidelines