

Child Safe Policy and Procedure

Scope

This policy is applicable to Headmasters Academy Pty Ltd T/A HeadMasters, BeautyMasters, MakeUpMasters (hereafter referred to as Headmasters).

Purpose

Headmasters is committed to Child Safety to support schools to create a child safe organisation and protect students from all forms of abuse.

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) are compulsory minimum standards for all organisations that provide services to children including Victorian schools. The aim of the Standards is to ensure organisations are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect. It is recognised that many schools will have existing policies and procedures that aim to keep children safe.

The Standards provide a framework to identify gaps and improve policy and practices around child safety. On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015, which amended the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 to introduce the Child Safe Standards that would apply to all organisations involved in child related work in Victoria.

This Child Safe Policy details how Headmasters will embed a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse and implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards. It covers material issues such as

- what child abuse means,
- the forms it can take,
- the standards of behaviour expected,
- the risk management strategies against child abuse and
- how to report issues of concern.

This Policy will ensure that children experience the fundamental right to be safe from the following forms of harm:

Physical Violence;

Sexual offences, including grooming with the intent to sexually abuse a child or engaging in sexual activity with a child under 16;

Serious emotional or psychological abuse; Serious neglect; and

Unfair treatment on the basis of disability, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation and/or religion.

Child abuse can include physical or sexual harm, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, or family violence. It does not have to involve physical contact or force. Child abuse can include:

Sexually abusing or exploiting a child; Talking to a child in a sexually explicit way; Grooming a child for future sexual activity; Forcing a child to watch pornography; Being witness to family violence; Engaging in sexual activity with a child under 16;

Failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision or medical care to the extent that the development of the child is placed at serious risk or is significantly impaired.

Policy Statements

Child Safe Standards

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

Child Safe Standards under Standard VET Auspiced Contract

The parties acknowledge and agree that Victorian Government Schools are committed to:

- Creating child safe environments;
- Protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse in accordance with their legal obligations, including child safety laws.

This clause only applies to the extent that Headmasters is engaged in Child-connected work. Headmasters acknowledges that the School Council and School Staff are required to comply with Child Safety Laws, the Ministerial Order and School Council Child Safety Policies.

If the RTO is an Applicable Entity, it warrants to the School Council that it:

- Is compliant and will continue to comply with Child Safety Laws; and
- Will immediately provide the School Council with copies of any documents or information in respect to any compliance action taken by any regulatory authority in connection with child safety against the RTO.

Headmasters must:

- If applicable (whether or not the RTO must itself comply with Child Safety Laws), comply with any relevant School Council Child Safety Policies; and
- Comply with any reasonable direction by the School Council in respect to compliance by the School Council, School Staff and/or the RTO with any Child Safety Laws or any relevant School Council Child Safety Policies.

The School Council may terminate this Contract immediately if, in the School's Council's reasonable opinion, it determines at any time that:

- There is a breach of any Child Safety Laws caused by, or in any way connected with, the RTO; or
- Headmasters is not suitable to engage in Child-connected work for the purposes of the School Council and School Staff's compliance with the Child Safety Laws or relevant School Council Child Safety Policies.

Procedural Statements

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Our commitment to child safety:

- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children studying at HeadMasters.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very

- seriously and consistently, in line with our robust code of conduct policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety.
 - Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, removing and reducing these risks.
 - Our organisation has strict recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
 - Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
 - We are committed to the safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
 - We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

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

Principles for Child Safety

In its planning, decision-making and operations, HeadMasters will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

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

School Staff Responsibilities

Responsibilities of HeadMasters staff (employees, volunteers and contractors) include:

- Treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- Following the legislative and internal school processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- Assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- Following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct embedded below.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

HeadMasters is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. HeadMasters community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our College is a safe,

supportive and enriching environment, which respects and fosters the safety, wellbeing and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, school policies and procedures and professional standards, code and ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

HeadMasters Management will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. HeadMasters will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

Staff, contractors, third parties and any other member of the school community involved in child related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct applies in all collegesituations, including Homestay, Student Care support, camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable Behaviours

Staff, contractors, third parties and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of child by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times adhering to the HeadMasters Child Safe Policy.
- Treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the HeadMasters CEO.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, student support services, contractors, third parties and any other member of the school community involved in child-related must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'to grooming' behaviour.
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context.
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a

- therapeutic setting.
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
 - Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, text etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter. Exceptions also extend to Student Care Assist and approved Homestay families.
 - Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes.
 - In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.
 - Have a sexual relationship with a student.
 - Using sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students.
 - Touches a student without a valid reason.

Reporting and Responding

HeadMasters record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using the Four Critical Actions for VET and Higher Education Providers - Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse and Protect Form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

At HeadMasters, we all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident.

HeadMasters has established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student. When there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been or may be committed, procedures to make a report include:

If the child is at immediate risk:

- Call '000' immediately
- Reassure the child and ensure they are safe
- Be aware of important considerations including cultural, linguistic, physical or intellectual impairments
- Let the child use their own words to describe what has or is occurring.

Anytime there is information to be reported (including after the above actions):

- Contact a member of the Child Safety team (Wellbeing, Student Support or Leadership)
- Document a description of what happened
- Follow relevant child safety and mandatory reporting processes (refer to Mandatory reporting policy)

Ongoing investigation and follow-up:

- The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police
- Staff members may be asked to act as a support for the student during the investigation.

Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

Recruitment

Headmasters will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All staff engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, Homestay parents and Student Care Assist are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

We ensure that we obtain the person's history of work involving children and references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children. Our Homestay and Student Care Assist selection process is also subject to same procedures. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Education and Training for Staff

Our Staff and Trainers

This Child Safe Policy guides our Staff and Trainers on how to behave with children in the context of delivering education and training for Secondary School Students.

All of our Staff and Trainers must agree to abide by our Child Safe Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All Staff and Trainers are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Code of Conduct.

Training and Education

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in Headmasters understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Headmasters culture aims for all Staff and Trainers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our Staff and Trainers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Headmasters provides its employees and volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes: induction information on Child Safety and practices around responding to allegations of child abuse ongoing presentations to staff by Wellbeing team, Student Support and Leadership weekly student wellbeing team meetings monthly student support team meetings.

These practices enhance the understanding of all staff about their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

Headmasters advise all Staff and Trainers to undertake the training once per calendar year.

Risk Management

At HeadMasters, we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise. This includes risks posed by the physical environment of the college as well as online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child on social media unless the administrative responsibilities are governed by the college and is integral to the student accessing the curriculum).

Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we take as an organisation.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, trainers, parents or children, 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.

Relevant Legislation

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Risk Management

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

Three new criminal offences have been introduced in this Act:

- a) **Failure to disclose offence:** Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
- b) **Failure to protect offence:** The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will

become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

- c) **Grooming offence:** This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Refer to Reporting Sexual Abuse Policy for further information.

Breach of Policy

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, HeadMasters will deal with the matter in accordance with its policies and procedures. Staff are advised this may lead to disciplinary consequences.

Where the Campus Director or CEO is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the Director. Relevant notification should also be made to the Department of Education and Training.

Where any other member of the school community is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action, including contacting the Department of Education (Conduct and Ethics Branch and Legal Branch) and Department of Human Services (DHS).

Regular Review

HeadMasters are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

Version Control and accountable officers

Responsible Officer	Campus Director(s)
Implementation Officers	Homestay & U18 Welfare Coordinator
Review Date	June 2022