

# Child Wellbeing and Safety Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this procedure is to:

- a. demonstrate Melbourne Polytechnic’s commitment to provide a safe environment which seeks to ensure the care, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, and protect them from all forms of harm and abuse; and
- b. describe the process and assign responsibility for child wellbeing and safety for all staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors.

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to:

- a. Melbourne Polytechnic Board members, employees, students, representatives and volunteers, including both Whittlesea and Banyule Nillumbik Tech Schools;
- b. contractors, tenants, licensees or lessees, and service providers where there is a connection with Melbourne Polytechnic, or when attending Melbourne Polytechnic campuses;
- c. customers and visitors when engaged in activities with or for Melbourne Polytechnic, or when attending Melbourne Polytechnic campuses; and
- d. partner organisations or people acting for or on behalf of Melbourne Polytechnic in relation to our students and staff.

## Section 3 - Procedure

### Mandatory Reporting Requirements

(3) All Melbourne Polytechnic staff must report offences of child abuse or harm. Failure to report child abuse is a criminal offence. Concerns regarding suspected or actual abuse of children must be reported promptly to a [Child Safety Officer](#).

(4) When responding to disclosures, staff should be mindful of the following:

<p>DO reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing in telling you          DO inform the child/young person of the reporting procedure          DO allow the child/young person to speak in their own words and as much as they need to          DO commence the Reporting Procedure immediately after disclosure</p>	<p>DO NOT blame or shame the child/young person for any actions          DO NOT ask for details of the abuse that were not in the disclosure          DO NOT allow the child or young person to return to the place where the alleged abuse occurred          DO NOT unnecessarily inform individuals of the disclosure unless they are the reporting line</p>
--	--

## Reporting Child Abuse Concerns

(5) Where a staff member has a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been abused or is at risk of being abused they must first ensure that the child is out of the risk of danger and is safe.

(6) If a child or young person is in immediate danger, staff students and associates must notify Police immediately by phone on 000.

(7) If a staff member, student or associate considers that a child is at immediate risk on campus, they should call Campus Security, and seek to ensure that the child is protected and removed from any immediate harm.

(8) If there is a risk to the immediate safety of a child (non-life-threatening), staff, students or associates should immediately telephone Child Protection in their local government area (business hours) or the Child Protection Crisis Line after hours on 13 12 78.

(9) Child Protection Services may only investigate if the abuse is by an adult against a child aged under 16 years. In relation to all child abuse concerns, staff, students and associates must:

- a. follow the [Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse – Four Critical Actions Factsheet](#) in responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse;
- b. report child abuse concerns to a Melbourne Polytechnic Child Safety Officer and seek advice on how to make an external report;
- c. report child abuse concerns to external authorities as soon as possible;
- d. comply with all applicable mandatory and legal reporting requirements, including by reporting suspected child abuse matters to Child Protection and/or the Victorian Police; and
- e. complete the Melbourne Polytechnic [Child Safety Report Form](#) and submit this to:
  - i. a [Child Safety Officer](#); and
  - ii. if the allegation involves a staff member, submit to Manager, People and Culture; or
  - iii. all other allegations, Manager, Student Services

(10) The Child Safety Officer will receive, record and maintain reports of child abuse in accordance with the privacy and confidentiality requirements, and immediately notify the Chief Executive (or nominee).

(11) The Chief Executive (or nominee) will begin a formal investigation as required by the [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#).

(12) The Chief Executive (or nominee) will report to CCYP by taking the following steps:

- a. Within three (3) business days notify CCYP of the following:
  - i. Name of the worker or volunteer against whom the allegation has been made
  - ii. Date of birth
  - iii. Police report
  - iv. Organisation contact details
  - v. Head of organisation's name
  - vi. Initial advice on the nature of the allegation
- b. Within thirty (30) business days, provide an update to CCYP with the following:
  - i. Details of the allegation
  - ii. Details of your response to the allegation
  - iii. Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed
  - iv. Any written response from the worker or volunteer about the allegation and the proposed disciplinary or

other action

- c. As soon as practicable, advise CCYP on the investigation and the name and contact details of the Investigator as soon as practicable;
- d. Notify the CCYP of all outcomes of the investigation, provide a copy of findings and reasons for the findings;
- e. As soon as practicable, provide all details about any disciplinary or other action proposed by Melbourne Polytechnic and reasons for taking this action or not acting; and
- f. Provide CCYP with further information and documents as requested.

## Section 4 - Responsibility and Accountability

(13) The Chief Executive and Executive Directors will oversee and deliver strategies and initiatives to embed an organisational culture to child safety, through effective leadership arrangements, and championing child safe practices by leading through example.

(14) The Chief Executive is responsible for meeting the obligations of the Reportable Conduct Scheme and is the nominated head for Melbourne Polytechnic's compliance.

(15) The Executive Director People, Culture and Corporate Services will provide supervision, training, screening and other robust staff recruitment processes that minimise the risk of child abuse.

(16) Child Safety Officers will facilitate training, provide information and support, and advise on mandatory reporting requirements for staff and students. They are also responsible for receiving, reviewing and responding to incidents and outcomes (summary reporting and continuous improvement).

(17) The Manager, Student Services will provide children with access to tailored supports and services.

(18) The Student Wellbeing Adviser, Counsellors and Koori Liaison and Support Officers will provide students with pastoral care and appropriate support assessed on an individual basis, and/or provide referral to external agencies where appropriate.

(19) All staff must comply with the [Child Safety Standards](#) and requirements to respond to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of Child Abuse.

## Section 5 - Definitions

(20) For the purpose of this procedure the definitions set out in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Policy will apply.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	7th December 2023
<b>Review Date</b>	6th December 2026
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Approval Date</b>	6th December 2023
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Cathy Frazer Executive Director Student Engagement International and Community Partnerships
<b>Policy Implementation Officer</b>	Karen Cook Manager Student Services
<b>Author</b>	Karen Cook Manager Student Services
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Karen Cook Manager Student Services