

# Child Safety Policy (MPF1337)

## 1. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- a) outline the University's commitment to child safety;
- b) outline appropriate standards of behaviour towards children; and
- c) guide the development of systems and processes that support the prevention and management of child abuse risks.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including student, employees, visitors and all other individuals engaged activities reasonably connected with the University, to the extent that their activities include dealings or contact with children.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is an individual under the age of 18 years.

## 3. Authority

This policy is made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Vice-Chancellor Regulation](#) and supports compliance with the:

- a) *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic);
- b) *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- c) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Policy;
- d) *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cth);
- e) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- f) Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities;
- g) Victorian Child Safe Standards; and
- h) *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic).

## 4. Policy

4.1. The University is an inclusive and welcoming environment that supports the safety, participation, empowerment and wellbeing of all children. In particular, the University will:

- a) promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- b) provide a safe environment in which children with a disability can participate equally.

4.2. The University does not tolerate child abuse in any form, and will:

- a) take a proactive approach to the prevention of child abuse by identifying, removing and/or reducing risks early; and
- b) treat all allegations and safety concerns relating to child abuse very seriously.

4.3. The University is committed to promoting best practices in relation to child safety.

## **5. Procedural Principles**

### **Child Safe Champion**

5.1. The following procedural principles outline appropriate standards of behaviour towards children. The Child Safe Champion is responsible for implementing the following standards throughout the University.

5.2. The Provost is the University's Child Safe Champion.

### **General**

5.3. All members of the University community are responsible for promoting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- a) treating children with respect;
- b) complying with all relevant laws, regulations, policies, processes and guidelines;
- c) reporting any instances of suspected child abuse in accordance with section 5.14; and
- d) complying with any child safety training, registration or accreditation requirements which may be relevant to their duties or activities.

### **Cultural safety**

5.4. The University will recognise and adapt to the needs of children and communities, including those outlined in section 4.1.

5.5. Where appropriate, the University will ensure that information is presented in a child-friendly, culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner.

### **International students**

5.6. The University will ensure that appropriate accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements are made to protect the personal safety and social wellbeing of any child who is:

- a) currently enrolled in a University course, subject or program as an international student; and
- b) not being cared for in Australia by a parent or a suitable nominated relative.

### **Research**

5.7. Any member of the University community who conducts research with, or relating to, children must comply with all Human Ethics Subcommittee requirements, including, where relevant, the requirements of the [DFAT Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct](#).

## Privacy, technology and social media

5.8. All members of the University community must protect the privacy of children and their families in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#).

5.9. All members of the University community must ensure that technology and social media are used appropriately in connection with children, including by:

- a) obtaining all necessary approvals from parents, guardians, or otherwise in accordance with relevant processes and guidelines;
- b) ensuring that any use of technology and social media is not detrimental to the child or harmful to the child's safety; and
- c) presenting children in a dignified and respectful manner.

5.10. Any member of the University community who photographs or films children, or uses images of children, for study or work-related purposes must:

- a) obtain informed consent from a parent or guardian of the child and, where appropriate, directly from the child;
- b) ensure that the content and purpose of the photographs, film and video material are appropriate in accordance with section 5.9; and
- c) act in accordance with all relevant processes, guidelines and operating rules, including (where applicable) the University's [social media guidelines](#).

## Child abuse

5.11. All members of the University community must avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse. In particular, members of the University community have a positive duty to avoid:

- a) using language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- b) exploiting or harassing children in any way;
- c) engaging in unauthorised personal contact with children, including through social networking sites; or
- d) developing special relationships that could be seen as favouritism.

5.12. All members of the University community must immediately report any concerns or allegations of child abuse or non-compliance with this policy in accordance with University processes established under section 5.14.

5.13. A failure to comply with sections 5.11 or 5.12 may constitute a criminal offence and result in serious penalties.

## Responding to and reporting child abuse

5.14. The University's Child Safety Officer is responsible for establishing and implementing processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

5.15. The University's Child Safety Officer is the Director of Wellbeing, Academic Services.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

| <i>Role/Decision/Action</i>  | <i>Responsibility</i>                  | <i>Conditions and limitations</i> |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Implementation of Child Safe Standards in the University                     | Provost                                | ...                               |
| Establishing processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse | Director, Wellbeing, Academic Services | ...                               |

## 7. Definitions

**Aboriginal child** means a person under the age of 18 years who:

- is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.

**Child** means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse** means any act committed against a child involving:

- physical violence (including threats of physical violence)
- sexual abuse
- serious emotional or psychological abuse; or
- serious neglect.

**Child safety**, in the context of this policy, means measures to protect children from child abuse.

**Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds** means a child who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.

**Cultural safety of Aboriginal children** means the positive recognition and celebration of Aboriginal cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

**Cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds** means an environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need.

**Members of the University community** means:

a) University employees;

b) University students; and

c) all other individuals engaged in activities reasonably connected with the University, including contractors, consultants, honorary, visiting or adjunct appointees, University Council members, volunteers, visitors, student clubs, student unions, and affiliated residential colleges.

## POLICY APPROVER

Provost

## POLICY STEWARD

Director, Students and Equity, Chancellery

## REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by 30 January 2022.

## VERSION HISTORY

| Version | Approved by                   | Approval Date | Effective Date | Sections modified   |
|---------|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---|
| 1       | Provost                       | 30 Jan 2017   | 1 Jan 2017     | New policy to comply with Victorian Child Safe Standards requirements.  |
| 2       | Director, Students and Equity | 7 Mar 2017    | 7 Mar 2017     | Editorial amendment to sections 3 and 5.7 to include the <i>Working with Children Act 2005</i> (Vic) and new DFAT Child Protection Standards. |