



### PURPOSE

This policy sets out the College's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the College's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

### MLC'S COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

MLC has a proud history of providing students with a safe and nurturing environment in which to prosper and thrive. This environment exists as a result of the wellbeing roles and structures in place, sound wellbeing policies and processes and the delivery of a comprehensive student wellbeing program.

The College's core values of respect, responsibility and compassion guide the development of all policies and procedures.

MLC is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and supports and respects all children, as well as employees, contractors, agency staff and volunteers. As a community, we have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently in accordance with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

MLC is committed to preventing child abuse through identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks. MLC has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all employees and volunteers. MLC is committed to regularly training and educating employees and volunteers on child safe practices and child abuse risks.

MLC supports and respects all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal students, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, 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. MLC will ensure strict legal and moral adherence to laws and legislation.

### SCOPE

This policy relates to all MLC employees, contractors, agency staff and volunteers, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy applies across all school environments, including all MLC campuses (Kew and the Boarding House, MLC Banksia and MLC Marshmead), both during and outside of school hours and within and outside the physical school environment (excursions, camps and tours) and the online environment. It also applies to external individuals and programs used by International Students on a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter, for whom MLC is responsible (boarding and homestay). For the purposes of this policy, these external individuals and programs fit under the 'contractor' descriptor.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The College's approach to providing an environment supporting child safety and to ensuring adherence with the Child Safe Standards includes:

#### A Child Safe Culture

The College's culture encourages staff and all community members to identify, raise, discuss and examine concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. [The MLC Child Safe Strategies](#) have been identified for creating a child safe culture and this internal document can be found on the Staff Hub (Document Central).

## Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/Code of Conduct

Members of the College Management Team are responsible for ensuring that employees, contractors, agency staff and volunteers understand their role, responsibilities and the behaviours expected to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect. All employees, contractors, agency staff and volunteers are required to comply with the MLC Code of Conduct in addition to other employee-specific professional codes (i.e. teachers - VIT Code of Conduct).

The College's [Code of Conduct Policy](#) and the [MLC Relationships Policy](#) provide clarity on the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. These policies can be found on the Staff Hub (Document Central).

## Human Resources

The College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work at the College. We ensure that staff induction, education and annual training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective employees are required to undergo a National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check/VIT registration. Contractors, non-teaching agency staff and volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check. Agency staff working as teachers require VIT registration and Pre-Service teachers require a Working with Children Check.

The College's approach to human resources practices that ensure child safety are outlined in the [Recruitment Process Policy](#), available on the Staff Hub – Document Central. This policy outlines the process completed by MLC to ensure that staff, contractors and volunteers are suitable for child-connected work.

## Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The College makes clear to staff and volunteers the expectations related to making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the MLC 'designated contact' and notifying of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The College will take immediate action to respond to a complaint and ensure immediate safety of the child.

The College policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint are detailed in the [MLC Child Protection Policy \(Including Mandatory Reporting\)](#) which is available on the Staff Hub – Document Central. This policy clearly outlines the reporting expectations for individuals involved in child-connected work.

## Training and Induction

The College commits to ensuring that all staff understand the following as part of their initial induction to the College:

- obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
- child abuse risks in the school environment
- the school's current child safety standards
- the procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse including responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Scheme

Additionally, all staff receive annual training/updates in the above points. This is completed via the following mediums; Full College Staff Meetings, video update or face to face meetings. The College keeps a register to ensure that all staff have completed their annual update.

## **Risk reduction and management**

The College believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount and is vigilant in ensuring comprehensive risk management processes. The College recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

The College's approach to Child Safety risk reduction and management aligns with the [College Risk Management Policy](#) available on the Staff Hub (Document Central).

## **Listening to children and young people**

The College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with and between children, young people and their parents/guardians. We encourage child/student and parent/guardian involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/guardians to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

When the College is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of a child, the College will listen to the complainant's account, take any concerns or allegations seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parent/guardian) appropriately informed about progress.

## **Confidentiality and Privacy**

The College collects, uses and discloses information about individual children and their families in accordance with State and Federal legislation. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information are included in the [College Privacy Policy](#) which can be found on myMLC at the following location: myMLC.net > Policies & Procedures > Corporate Services Admissions & Marketing.

## DEFINITIONS

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

- ◆ **Child** means a child enrolled as a student at the school.
  
- ◆ **Child abuse** includes –
  - any act committed against a child involving:
    - a sexual offence or
    - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
  - the infliction, on a child, of:
    - physical violence or
    - serious emotional or psychological harm
    - serious neglect of a child.
  
- ◆ **Child-connected work** means work authorised by the School Governing Authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
  
- ◆ **Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, 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.
  
- ◆ **School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College Management Team for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:
  - all campuses (Kew, Boarding House at MLC, MLC Banksia, MLC Marshmead)
  - online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
  - other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, external and other events).

*Note: for the purposes of this Policy, external programs conducted off-site for international students on a CAAW are subject to the same obligations).*

- ◆ **School Governing Authority** means the MLC Board
  
- ◆ **School Staff** means an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - directly engaged or employed by a School Governing Authority;
  - a volunteer or a contracted service provider; or
  - a minister of religion.

*Note: for the purposes of this Policy, adult members of approved homestay households and individuals/organisations conducting external programs for international students on a CAAW are subject to the same obligations to ensure child safety as school staff.)*

## DOCUMENT DETAILS

<b>Title:</b>	MLC Child Safe Policy
<b>Author(s):</b>	Vice Principal
<b>Approver:</b>	Vice Principal
<b>Owner (responsible for review):</b>	Director of Student Wellbeing
<b>Other staff involved in review:</b>	Members of the College Management Team Members of the Student Wellbeing Team We will ensure that College staff, families and children have the opportunity to contribute
<b>Created:</b>	July 2016
<b>Review Timeline:</b>	Biennial <i>This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents, if they occur</i>
<b>Master Document Location:</b>	Principal's Administration

## VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Description
V1	Jul 2016	To meet requirements of Ministerial Order 870 (meeting child safe standards)
V2	Oct 2019	Updated to reinforce requirement to communicate measures put in place for Boarding House contractors, external programs and local support persons.

## AUDIENCE

## PUBLICATION LOCATION

Members of the MLC community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>employees</li><li>contractors</li><li>agency staff</li><li>volunteers</li><li>local support persons</li><li>external tutors and programs</li></ul>	MLC Staff Hub External MLC website
Families	myMLCfamily website
Students	myMLC and Student Hub
New MLC families	Modified version (minus footer and version control sections) made available by the Admissions department