



Policy number	5.11	Version	4.0
Drafted by	CEO	Approved by Board on	20/09/2023
Responsible person	CEO	Scheduled review date	20/09/2026
Policy Area	Student Welfare		

Title: Child Safety and Wellbeing

Policy

Mountain District Learning Centre (MDLC) has no tolerance for child abuse.

This policy and related procedures reference the Ministerial Order (MO) 1359 Child Safe Standards – Managing risk of child abuse in schools.

Scope

All individuals who are working or volunteering at MDLC are required to comply with this code of conduct.

Standards of Conduct

Staff and volunteers at MDLC are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children.

All Mountain District Learning Centre (MDLC) staff, contractors and Board members are required to observe child safe principles and are required to sign the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct each year.

Associated Documents:

MDLC Policies, Procedures and Documents:

- 1.01 Policy development, dissemination, and review
- 2.03 Risk Management Policy
- 3.06 Recruitment Policy
- 3.02 Induction Policy
- 3.06 A1 Reference Check Template
- 3.06 A2 Child Safety Staff Recruitment Checklist
- 5.04 Student Behaviour Management
- 5.03 Student Code of Conduct
- 5.10 Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations
- 5.10 A1 Four Critical Actions
- 5.10 A2 Child Safety & Wellbeing Incident Report Form
- 5.11 A1 Child Safety Code of Conduct
- 5.11 A2 Child Safety Information Sheet- CSIS 2 Recognising Signs of Child Abuse
- 5.11 A3 Child Safety Information Sheet- CSIS 1 Signs of Sexual and Other Abuse in Teenagers
- 5.11 A4 Child Safety Information Sheet-CSIS 3 Empowerment-Education Program Timetable
- 5.11 A5 Child Safety & Wellbeing Risk Management Plan
- 5.11 A6 Child Safety & Wellbeing Review Checklist
- 5.11 A7 Child Safety & Wellbeing Student Placement Checklist
- 5.11 A8 Child Safety & Wellbeing Training Action Plan

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- 5.11 A9 Empowering Student Framework
- 5.11 A10 Child Safe Questionnaire
- 6.05 Continuous Improvement Policy
- 6.05 A1 Continuous Improvement Register
- 6.13 Privacy Policy
- 6.16 Compliance Obligations Policy
- 6.14 Complaints and Concerns Policy
- 4.01A3 Register of Contractors
- 5.17 Student Internet and ICT Usage
- 5.17A1 Internet Usage Agreement
- 6.29 IT Security
- 6.27 Acceptable Use for ICT Systems and IT usage

Information available from <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au>

- Failure to disclose information sheet
- Failure to protect information sheet
- Grooming offence factsheet

Information available from <https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/>

- Mandatory Reporting – Step by Step Guide

Information available from Department of Education and Training (DET)

- Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT)
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>
Including:
 - Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools
 - Four Critical Actions for schools
 - Recording your actions: responding to suspected child abuse
 - Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending
 - Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Ministerial Order 1359 (as a reference)
- The law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory
- Child Safe Standards Victoria
- Victoria Police Reporting Guidelines
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

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Procedure Document

Procedure Document No:	5.11P	Version	4.0
Drafted by	CEO	Approved by Board on	20/09/2023
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Policy Area			

Title: Child Safety and Wellbeing

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure document is to:

- Ensure MDLC adheres to the requirements of the 11 Child Safety Standards.
- Ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed.
- Promote the MDLC Commitment to Child Safety.
- Model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing.
- Enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered.
- Reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students.
- Promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the MDLC community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and Board meetings.
- Facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse.
- Create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.
- Facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within MDLC.
- Undertake comprehensive recruitment practices that support Child Safety and wellbeing.
- Ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing abuse and/or detecting abuse when it occurs.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers agree and adhere to the MDLC Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that all suspected abuses are reported and fully investigated.

Commitment

At all times MDLC is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of students operating in the physical and online environment. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to a safe environment.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between MDLC, staff members, students, parents/guardians, Board members, volunteers and contractors of MDLC. Any child who is deemed to be at risk of child abuse will not be discriminated against or treated differently while attending MDLC.

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MDLC will seek and consider the opinions of students and use their opinions to develop child protection practices. Refer to: 5.11 A10 Students Framework.

To support child-safe practices, MDLC will utilise the resources available from Child Protection and Child Safe Standards PROTECT platform - Information and advice on how to protect children, create a child safe environment, identify and report signs of abuse.

Resources are available via:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/>

Definitions

Adult: The term “adult” refers to any person of or over 18 years of age. Every adult at MDLC is responsible for the care and protection of the young people attending MDLC and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child: A child is a person under the age of 18 years.

Child protection: Any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse: Six recognised forms of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse and “grooming”, emotional child abuse, neglect and family violence.

Child sexual assault: Any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond their 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.

Orange Door: formerly Child First, The orange door provides help for people experiencing family violence, or who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.

Reasonable grounds for belief: 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 needs 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:

1. A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
2. A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
3. Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
4. 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

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5. Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Refer to 5.11A4 CSIS 2_MDLC_Recognising Signs of Child Abuse

Staff: The term “staff” refers to all people working or volunteering at MDLC including all employees, Board members, volunteers and contractors undertaking child related work.

Child Safe Standards

The 11 Child Safe Standards are as follows:

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which, among other things, the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Duty of Care

MDLC has a legal duty of care, to all its students, to take reasonable steps to protect them when they are under the care of MDLC from risks of injury that should have been reasonably foreseen. Young people have the right to a safe environment while at MDLC.

Duty of care obligations are part of legislation to protect children from any type of child abuse by reporting it to authorities and include:

- Acting on concerns quickly and in the child’s best interests.
- Protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of children.
- Seeking appropriate advice or consulting when unsure.
- Reporting concerns to the relevant authorities.
- Supporting a child at an interview.
- Providing ongoing support to a child and their family.
- Attending Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection Case Planning and Student Support/Care meetings as arranged.

Principle of Inclusion

MDLC recognises and supports the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable and promote and protect their safety.

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Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Board:

As the governing body, the Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that student safety and wellbeing, particularly in regard to young and vulnerable people, is of paramount importance.

Board responsibilities include:

- Undertake annual professional development on Child Safety matters.
- Oversee the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and monitoring adherence to it.
- Undertake an annual Child Safety Review.
- Oversee the annual Risk Management processes.
- Oversee arrangements for Staff and Board training.
- Ensure appropriate Child Safety recruitment practices have been followed.
- Record progress and follow continuous improvement practice.
- Ensure reporting on Child Safety matters is included in the CEO's monthly Board report.

Responsibilities of the CEO:

- Accept responsibility for Child Safety within MDLC.
- Report Child Safety matters to the Board.
- Ensure complete and up to date knowledge of all Child Safe requirements as per legislation through attendance at professional development sessions on Child Safety.
- Take action to protect children and young people under "Failure to Protect" legislation where a person associated with MDLC poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing children under the age of 16.
- Enact the MDLC Child Safety policy and adhering to applicable legislation.
- Arrange for training of Board members in creating child safe organisations.
- Arrange for staff training on Child Safety standards and the prevention and reporting of child abuse.
- Include child safety matters as an agenda item in meetings to ensure information regarding red flags and child safety concerns is shared.
- Ensure all staff, Board members, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Ensure the Child Safety Code of Conduct is issued to staff and a record of such is recorded on the Staff Safety Register.
- Communicate Child Safety information including reporting responsibilities to all relevant people associated with MDLC.
- Undertake risk management procedures annually in relation to Child Safety including comprehensive mitigation strategies for all situations including off-site activities and excursions or incursions or at activities that may be held outside normal hours of operation.
- Consider the cultural needs and diverse needs of each individual child and support their equal inclusion and protection while attending MDLC.
- Ensure supervision of children attending MDLC is robust.
- Ensure information sharing and record keeping procedures are in accordance with recordkeeping standards and in keeping with privacy and employment law obligations.
- Ensure Managers are aware of Child Safety & Wellbeing recruitment procedures.
- Notify the Senior Youth Worker of their duty to undertake the role of Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer.

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Responsibilities of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer

- Support the CEO in the implementation of Child Safe policies and practices at MDLC.
- Support the CEO, Manager, Youth Workers and all staff in meeting reporting obligations in response to an allegation of child abuse.
- Ensure MDLC Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and practices are clearly and regularly communicated to staff, students, and families. Information will include:
 - Indicators of child abuse.
 - Reporting procedures.
 - Student empowerment practice and key education requirements.
 - Record keeping obligations.
 - Privacy considerations.
- Ensure student safety and wellbeing strategies are being implemented effectively and strengthened when required.
- Report incidences or concerns of Child Safety and Wellbeing matters to the CEO.

Responsibilities of Teachers, Youth Workers and Staff (including volunteers and contractors working directly with students).

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, adhere to Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct and MDLC policies and procedures in relation to child protection and comply with all requirements.
- Familiarise themselves with the key risk indicators of child abuse or reportable conduct, being observant and raising any concerns they have, no matter how minor, with the CEO/Education & Training Manager/Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer (Senior Youth Worker) and/or external agencies as required.
- Complete Child Safety training as required by MDLC. If unclear on any aspects of Child Safety obligations, raise the matter either at staff meetings or directly with the CEO or Manager.
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.
- Ensure record keeping procedures are adhered to.
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Note:

Failure to Disclose is a criminal offence.

MDLC staff must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police (call 000 or your local police station). MDLC staff must also report internally to the CEO.

The Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer, as the person with delegated responsibility for Child Safety at MDLC, is responsible for ensuring Child Safety reporting procedures are implemented and must ensure incidents or concerns are reported to the CEO who will report to the Board.

Child Safe Standard 1

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

- Aboriginal cultural training for staff and Board is undertaken annually.

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- Aboriginal culturally specific activities are incorporated into course curriculum and into events and occasions to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture.
- Acknowledgement of Country is included at all meetings, information sessions and events.
- Sorry Day and NAIDOC week are promoted and acknowledged.
- Consultation with Aboriginal cultural representatives from within the MDLC community or from the wider community is undertaken to build connections and understanding.
- MDLC has no tolerance to racism and ensures the process for reporting and addressing incidences of racism is communicated to the MDLC community.
- Display of posters and information to assist with creating a culturally safe environment.
- Include acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture on email signatures.

Child Safe Standard 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Mountain District Learning Centre (MDLC) is a child safe organisation that welcomes all children, young people and their families, therefore:

- Is committed to providing environments where students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. MDLC child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.
- Has no tolerance for child abuse and takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in the physical and online environments of MDLC.
- Promotes positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.
- Takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students at MDLC. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, they are treated seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- Gives particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at MDLC and any instances identified are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- Recognises Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved at MDLC has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.
- Is committed to regularly reviewing child safe practices, and seeking input from students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform ongoing strategies.

A Culture of Child Safety

MDLC embeds a culture of Child Safety through proactive leadership demonstrating appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours. MDLC fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness.

- Students will know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.
- The CEO, Board member, Managers, trainers, staff members and all other adults attending MDLC will know how to respond to incidences of child abuse.

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- Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on their individual characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated, and any instances identified are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- Parents/carers are provided with information about Child Safety and Wellbeing.
- Child Safety and Wellbeing information is displayed.

MDLC communicates the Child Safety Statement via the MDLC website, posters displayed at the Centre and at staff meetings and information sessions. The Child Safety Statement is included in staff and parent/student handbooks.

Annual Review

The CEO and Board of Directors undertake a Child Safety Review annually (or immediately if an incident occurs) and seek input from students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform ongoing strategies.

This will include reviewing:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures.
- The implementation of the Child Safe Standards.
- Risk management strategies to ensure they are attuned to Child Safety issues.
- Inclusion strategies for children from diverse backgrounds or with additional needs and ensure specific additional needs are accommodated in risk and communication strategies.
- The Empowering Students Framework and its implementation.
- The strategy for communicating the Child Safety Policy to students, staff, parents/guardians and others associated with the MDLC community.
- The Statement of Commitment to Child Safe Standards and ensure it is included on all staff position descriptions.

And ensuring that

- Staff have signed a Child Safe Code of Conduct and the Staff Safety Register reflects this.
- Child Safety responsibilities of staff are included in recruitment and induction procedures.
- Child Safety information on protective factors (including in on-line environments) and avenues for assistance are included in learning activities for students.
- Information about Child Safety related practices, as implemented during each year are included on the MDLC website.

Refer to 5.11A7 Child Safety Student Placement Checklist.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

- Promote child safety in the MDLC environment.
- Set standards about the ways in which individuals engaged at MDLC are expected to behave and conduct themselves when interacting with our students.
- Outline the possible consequences should this code of conduct be breached.

All staff, volunteers and Board members of MDLC are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children (under 18 years). They are required to adhere to the MDLC Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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Child Safe Standard 3

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Empowerment of Children

MDLC has developed an Empowering Students Framework which outlines its methodology in ensuring students are empowered to participate in processes that directly affect them.

MDLC will endeavour to:

- Listen to what young people want and need to help them to be safe.
- Provide an environment where young people feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns.
- Ensure young people have multiple avenues for reporting concerns.
- Empower young people by providing accessible information about child abuse, their rights and how they can raise concerns about abuse.
- Provide information in multiple formats including spoken, written and on-line.
- Accept opportunities to raise awareness of the wider community's responsibility to protect young people from abuse.

MDLC will deliver appropriate education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending MDLC.
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality).
- Resilience.
- Child abuse awareness and prevention.

Education programs are delivered in a format that students will most readily engage with. Education programs have been informed by **PROTECT: A Guide to Support Victorian Schools to Meet Child Safe Standard 7**.

Child Safe Standard 4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

The MDLC community has an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support community engagement, MDLC will provide accessible information about its child safe policies and practices and involve them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

MDLC will create opportunities for its community to have input into the development and review of its child safety policies and practices and encourage the community to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

This is achieved by:

- Including child safe information on the MDLC website, in newsletters and at Board and Staff meetings.
- Promote and explain MDLC's child safety policies and procedures.
- Inform students about child safety measures and include information in learning plans.
- Displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters.
- Communicating and explaining to families in clear language avenues for expressing concerns about children's feelings of safety, security and confidence in the MDLC environment.

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- Encouraging families and students to communicate concerns, which are followed up rigorously and feedback provided.
- Protecting the privacy of individuals who raise concerns.
- Student surveys and family surveys issued at least annually to prompt feedback on matters relevant to child safety.

Child Safe Standard 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

- MDLC, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people’s diverse circumstances, provides support, and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- MDLC pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- MDLC pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

This is achieved by:

- Planning and participating in awareness raising activities around cultural diversity such as IDAHOBIT day, Sorry Day, Wear it Purple Day etc. Information available via the Diversity Council Australia.
- Adhering to the MDLC Access and Equity policy.
- Promoting and celebrating our welcoming and inclusive environment.

Child Safe Standard 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Recruitment of New Personnel

MDLC ensures staff members have the appropriate qualifications to work within the Centre and that reasonable efforts are made to gather, verify and record information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work.

MDLC undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff, which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of MDLC.
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share MDLC’s values and commitment to protect children.
- Prevent a person from working at MDLC if they pose a risk to children.

MDLC requires all staff/volunteers to pass through the organisation’s recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with MDLC. Procedures for recruitment are detailed in the Recruitment of Staff policy.

Persons applying for a role as a teacher at MDLC must have current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) or provisional VIT registration.

Board members and all non-teaching staff employed at MDLC must provide a Working with Children Check (or VIT card) and a current police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at MDLC.

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Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications must be presented and verified as part of the recruitment process.

MDLC will establish the nature of work involving children and will undertake thorough reference checks (at least 2) as per the MDLC recruitment policy and complete the Child Safety Staff Recruitment Checklist.

Refer to policy 3.06 Recruitment of Staff.

Visitors: The Manager must be notified of and approve visitors to MDLC prior to their attendance. All visitors must report at reception, adhere to sign in and out procedures and wear visitor identification while attending MDLC.

Volunteers: The Manager must approve volunteer or student placements in their programs in advance. All volunteers including students on placement at MDLC are required to complete an MDLC volunteer registration form, supply verification documents as appropriate, present a current Working With Children Check and Police Check and undertake an induction process prior to commencement.

Contractors: Regular contractors who work in the presence of students will be advised to provide a copy of their Working With Children's Check and will be required to sign the Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct. If contracted work is undertaken where students are present, supervision will be provided at all times.

Induction

Induction procedures are undertaken over a 3-6 month period and include:

- Explanation of MDLC values.
- Assignment of a mentor.
- Training in Child Safety responsibilities.
- Commitment to the Code of Conduct.
- Training in Child Safe policies and procedures.
- Training in understanding the nature and signs of abuse.
- Training on mandatory reporting obligations.
- Completion of the MDLC Induction Checklist.

Supervision of Staff and Performance Reviews

- MDLC monitors and assesses employee/volunteer continuing suitability for child-connected work. Supervision is provided by the CEO and Managers throughout the 3-6 month induction period.
- The CEO and/or relevant Manager will conduct staff appraisals/performance reviews annually with all staff members which will address ongoing suitability of staff in regard to Child Safe standards. Reviews will include all contracted staff.
- Periodic reviews of service contractors are undertaken which will include suitability of child connected work.
- The Senior Youth Worker will undertake an audit of all MDLC Child Safe Records annually and provide a report on gaps/omissions or areas for improvement to the CEO.
- The CEO will submit the results of performance reviews and Child Safe Records audit to the Board, as part of continuous improvement processes.

Child Safe Standard 7

Child focused processes for complaints and concerns include:

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- A complaint handling policy 6.14.
- Effective complaint handling processes that are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- Procedures are in place to report to relevant authorities.
- Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

What is reportable conduct?

When a person has a reasonable belief that there has been:

- A sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing).
- Sexual misconduct.
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm.
- Significant neglect of a child.
- Misconduct involving any of the above.

The scope of 'reportable conduct' is wide and is not limited to criminal conduct. This means that reportable conduct includes:

- Sexual abuse.
- Grooming.
- Sexting.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Sexualised behaviour with a child.

Reportable conduct includes information about something that is alleged to have occurred outside the course of the person's employment.

Ongoing Support

MDLC will ensure any student who has been the subject of child abuse allegations and reporting procedures receives ongoing support which may include:

- Coordinating allied health and wellbeing supports and services.
- Updating the student wellbeing plan.
- Maintaining regular contact with parents (as appropriate) to support the student's wellbeing.
- Ensuring ongoing follow up.

Child Safe Standard 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement MDLC's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, to recognise indicators of child harm, to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm and how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Training for MDLC Staff, Board and Volunteers

Training is undertaken in the following areas:

- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- The procedures for responding to complaints and concerns about child abuse.

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- Guidance on:
 - Recognising indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children and students.
 - Responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm.
 - How to build culturally safe environments for children and students.
 - Information sharing and recordkeeping obligations.
 - Identifying and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in MDLC’s environment without compromising a child’s or student’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

Child Safety and Wellbeing and Mandatory Reporting training is undertaken as part of induction and annual training procedures.

Training Documentation

A training schedule is completed to ensure training is planned, timetabled and delivered and a register is in place to show which staff have completed staff training when it was undertaken.

Child Safe Standard 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Risk Management

Child safety is a part of MDLC’s overall risk management approach.

Risk Management is overseen through the Board which are committed to identifying and managing risks at MDLC. In addition to organisational risk management systems, risk management procedures specific to measures undertaken to manage risks of abuse to children at MDLC are reviewed and implemented on an annual basis using the PROTECT Child Safe Risk Management Template available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/child-safety-risk-register.docx>

Key Risks in Summary

- Unintentional/accidental harm – poor supervision, high risk activity, poor physical environment leading to injury.
- Physical abuse – physical punishment, pushing, shoving, punching, slapping, biting, use of weapons and kicking.
- Psychological abuse – bullying, threatening, shaming, ignoring and isolating.
- Cultural abuse – lack of cultural respect, racial vilification or discrimination, lack of support to express cultural identity.
- Neglect – lack of supervision, not providing nutrition or clothing or shelter, not meeting needs.
- Sexual abuse – grooming, inappropriate touching, sex abuse or assault or exploitation, inappropriate sexual conversions (on-line or face to face), crossing professional boundaries.
- Third party arrangements where responsibility must be reinforced outside the organisation. (Note: MDLC does not currently participate in third party arrangements.)

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On-line Safety – key risks

- Cyber bullying – trolling, excluding, gossiping, abusive texts, imitating others.
- Image based abuse - posting personal images without permission, posting digitally altered images, images showing a person undertaking a private activity etc.
- Sending nudes and sexting.
- Sexual extortion (can include demands or threats relating to images).
- Unwanted or unsafe contact (being asked to do things that an individual is uncomfortable with).
- Online scams and identity theft (including making a person believe the person engaging with is someone else).
- Fake news and misinformation.
- Being contacted (or friended) by a stranger.
- Receiving inappropriate content.
- Being deliberately excluded from events or social groups.

The risks associated with on-line environments will be mitigated by:

- Undertaking a risk assessment of online platforms.
- Implementing policy 6.29 IT Security and 6.27 Acceptable Use for ICT Systems and IT usage policies for students; 5.17 Student Internet and ICT Usage and 5.17A1 Internet Usage Agreement.
- Monitoring activity on on-line platforms within classrooms.
- Complying with reporting and recording requirements and reminding staff members of their reporting obligations.
- Providing information to families on creating a child safe online environment.
- Review and continuously improve MDLC online platforms, practices, and procedures.

Child Safe Standard 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

- The Board conducts an annual review of Child Safety practice at MDLC.
- The CEO and Management team regularly review, evaluate and improve child safe practices.
- Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- Feedback is sought from staff, volunteers, students and families on MDLC's progress in implementing each of the Child Safe Standards. (See Child Safe Questionnaire.)

Continuous Improvement of Child Safe strategies

Where procedural flaws or failings are identified, improvements are made to prevent the problem from happening again and recorded on the Continuous Improvement Register.

- MDLC reports on the findings of relevant reviews and actions taken via the website or through newsletters.
- Records are kept of complaints, concerns, allegations and actions taken in response.
- Complaints, concerns, safety incidents or significant breaches of policy (such as the Code of Conduct) are examined to understand what caused the problem and whether there are any flaws in policies, procedures and practices that contributed to the problem.

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Child Safety Standard 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

- MDLC's policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- MDLC has a Child Safe Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers.
- Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- Risk management practice is in place with policy, register and annual reviews.
- Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- The Board, CEO, Managers and key staff champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- Staff understand and implement policies and procedures.
- Complaint handling procedures detail the response process if a complaint is received.
- Any third-party arrangements or engagements with contractors or agencies include the implementation of Child Safe measures.

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