

Child Safety Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Melbourne Polytechnic to the care, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability, from all forms of harm and abuse.

This policy will guide Melbourne Polytechnic staff, volunteers and contractors on how to behave with all children in our organisation and how to respond to suspected instances of child abuse.

2. Policy Statement

Melbourne Polytechnic has students aged under 18 years, has childcare centres located on campus and hosts visiting children and young people. Melbourne Polytechnic aims to establish and maintain a child safe organisation where children and young people feel safe, valued, respected, encouraged and empowered to reach their full potential.

Melbourne Polytechnic is committed to promoting a safe environment for staff and students. All children and young people at Melbourne Polytechnic have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children enrolled at or visiting the institute will be our first priority and child abuse of any nature will not be tolerated. We ensure all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability are safe guarded.

Melbourne Polytechnic commits to:

- (a) the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our organisation.
 - (b) providing all children and young people with positive and nurturing learning experiences.
 - (c) listening to all children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
 - (d) taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
 - (e) teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
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- (a) engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practices, policies and procedures.
 - (b) acknowledging the cultural diversity of all children and young people and being sensitive to how this may affect student safety issues.
 - (c) continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children and young people from abuse.

Our commitment to our organisations employees, volunteers, and contractors (called 'staff' for the purpose of this policy):

- (a) to ensuring all new and continuing staff are aware of their responsibilities to comply with the Institute Code of Conduct, Child Safe Standards and associated mandatory reporting requirements.

Child Safety Policy

- (b) to listening to all concerns voiced by Melbourne Polytechnic employees, volunteers and contractors about keeping all children and young people safe from harm.
- (c) to providing additional information and supports to staff responsible for programs where there are high numbers of under-aged students.

Principles

Melbourne Polytechnic has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create a nurturing environment where all children and young people including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability are respected, their voices heard and they are safe and feel safe.

This policy statement is guided by the following values and principles, which underpin our commitment to child safety

- Melbourne Polytechnic has Zero tolerance of child abuse
- All children and young people deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse
- All staff including volunteers and contractors have a responsibility to care for children and young people and positively promote their wellbeing to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse
- Concerns regarding suspected or actual abuse of children will be reported promptly to the appropriate internal personnel (Director Student Experience) as well as external authorities including Victoria Police and / or Department Health and Human Services (DHHS) as appropriate
- Where a child is at immediate risk of abuse or harm, emergency services should be called on '000' and reported promptly to internal personnel (Director Student Experience)
- The institute has robust recruitment and screening processes staff in contact with children
- Institute staff will be provided with appropriate information and training on the Child Safe Standards

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Melbourne Polytechnic staff (permanent and casual) including relevant Management
- Volunteers
- Contractors and Subcontractors
- Students and their families
- Visitors to the institute

Child Safety Policy

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Act: Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Aboriginal Child: A person under the age of 18 who is of, identifies as and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

Child: Any person under the age of 18 years

Child Abuse: constitutes any act committed against a child involving physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological harm and serious neglect

Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds: A child who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic associations 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

Children with a disability: A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury, intellectual disability, or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities

Child Safety: measures to protect children from all forms of child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse

Child Protection: An activity or initiative designed to protect children from all forms of harm, particularly arising from child abuse

Contact with Children: Working on an activity with children that involves or may involve contact, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment.

Cultural Safety: Is an environment, which is safe for children, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect

Personnel: are either employed by an organisation, engaged by an organisation on a subcontract basis, or engaged by an organisation on a voluntary or unpaid basis

Reasonable Belief: When staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. 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

Child Safety Policy

5. Responsibility and Accountability

Task	Responsibility	Notes
Publish Child Safety Policy	Executive Director People and Culture	The Child Safety Policy outlines our commitment to protecting children from all forms of abuse and promoting children's wellbeing.
Develop strategies and initiatives to embed an organisational culture to child safety, through effective leadership arrangements	Melbourne Polytechnic Executive team	The Executive team and Management will demonstrate leadership in modelling the appropriate values, behaviours and attitudes of Melbourne Polytechnic.
Ensure Melbourne Polytechnic's Code of Conduct for staff upholds the Child Safe Standards.	Executive Director People & Culture	Melbourne Polytechnic Code of Conduct promotes child safety.
Provide supervision, training, screening and other robust staff recruitment processes that minimise the risk of child abuse	Executive Director People & Culture	
All staff are aware and comply with the Child Safety Standards and requirements to respond to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of Child Abuse	Executive Director People and Culture Director Student Experience All Staff	Director Student Experience is identified as institute contact for staff with concerns for child safety. Concerns of child abuse will be reported to the Victorian police and relevant authorities as per procedure. A tool kit of resources when dealing with children and young adults will be made available for all staff.

6. Supporting Documents and Templates

[Melbourne Polytechnic's Code of Conduct](#)

[Student Discipline Policy](#)

[Support Students with Disabilities Policy](#)

[Working with Children Check and Police Check Policy](#)

[The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#)

Child Safety Policy

7. Policy Control

Approving authority	<i>Melbourne Polytechnic Executive</i>
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