CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Melbourne Girls Grammar is committed to the safety of every child enrolled as a student at our school. Children have the right to a safe environment at School. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

PURPOSE

This policy provides an overview of the key elements of our approach to child safety at Melbourne Girls Grammar (MGGS).

Melbourne Girls Grammar and its School Council:

- has zero tolerance for child abuse
- actively works to listen to and empower children
- has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures
- is committed to promoting physical, emotional and cultural safety for all children
- is committed to providing a safe environment for all children.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students and the wider School community who are engaged in child-connected work.

School staff are all individuals working in our school environment who are directly engaged or employed by MGGS, such as our teachers, administrative staff and non-teaching staff, our volunteers, contracted service providers and ministers of religion.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Principal and School Council are responsible for developing strategies that embed an organisational culture of child safety at MGGS. These strategies will give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing.

The School Council will monitor the school's adherence to this policy through its council meeting and sub-committee processes and from regular reports by school staff, including the Principal. The Principal is also responsible for compliance monitoring through a dedicated risk management team who will ensure and report on compliance and implementation of our child safety policies and procedures.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. Our policies and procedures will provide the name and conduct details of staff who have specific responsibilities in relation to child safety and who may receive reports of suspicion of child abuse.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child’s safety, which we follow rigorously.
We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

MGGS has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the emotional, physical and cultural safety of all children and to providing a safe environment for their learning.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

**OUR CHILDREN**

Our strategies will empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation and provide them with opportunities to give us feedback and ensure that they feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse.

**OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Child Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

**TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at MGGS understands that child safety is everyone’s responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

New employees and volunteers are briefed on commencement and provided with information to ensure they understand our organisation’s commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the Child Safety Code of Conduct on eVI to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

**RECRUITMENT**

At MGGS we take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people aged 18 and over engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please refer to the Working with Children Check Policy on eVI for further information.

We carry out thorough reference checks and pre-employment screening to ensure that we are recruiting with child safety in mind.
All public advertisements for job applications with MGGS will emphasise our commitment to child safety.

FAIR PROCEDURES
The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored by the School Counselling team, with a secure copy held in the Principal's Office.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

PRIVACY
All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone’s safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it. A copy of the Privacy Policy is available on the School website and on eVI.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES
At MGGS we take our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

- Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting and Protection of Children Policy for further information on these responsibilities.

ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS
MGGS takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and with urgency. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations and our volunteers are informed on how to report an allegation.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

For the School’s procedures for responding to and reporting historical or past claims, refer to the Child Safety - Child Abuse Redress Policy.
RISK MANAGEMENT

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

MGGS has an Executive Compliance Committee which meets on a regular basis and has a standing agenda item for Child Safety Risk Management.

MGGS will also ensure that appropriate assistance and support is provided to any child who discloses child abuse or is linked in any way to suspected child abuse.

DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>An individual who is under the age of 18 years and who is enrolled as a student at MGGS.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child abuse</td>
<td>Child abuse includes:-&lt;br&gt; (a) any act committed against a child involving:-&lt;br&gt; (i) a sexual offence; or&lt;br&gt; (ii) the offence of grooming; and&lt;br&gt; (b) the infliction, on a child, of:-&lt;br&gt; (i) physical violence; or&lt;br&gt; (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and&lt;br&gt; (c) serious neglect of a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-connected work</td>
<td>This is work that is authorised by MGGS that is performed by an adult in the MGGS school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child safety</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Safety Team</td>
<td>The MGGS Child Safety Team comprises the persons holding the following positions:&lt;br&gt; • Principal&lt;br&gt; • Deputy Principal – Staffing and Operations&lt;br&gt; • Deputy Principal – Curriculum and Innovation&lt;br&gt; • Director of Early Learning and Junior Years&lt;br&gt; • Director of Middle Years&lt;br&gt; • Director of Senior Years</td>
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School environment

The MGGS school environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by MGGS for use by a child during or outside school hours, and includes:

(a) our Morris Hall Campus in Caroline Street, South Yarra
(b) our Merton Hall Campus and ELC and Boarding House facilities in Anderson Street, South Yarra
(c) online school environments including email and intranet systems
(d) other locations provided by MGGS for a child's use, including locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The School community will be informed about this policy. It will be available on eVI and publicly available on the MGGS website and communicated in the School's newsletters.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that there is community consultation during the review cycle.

REFERENCES

Please refer to associated policies, guidelines and documents:

Child Safety Statement
Child Safety Code of Conduct
Child Safety - Child Abuse Redress Policy
Child Safety - Response and Reporting Procedure
Communication Technologies Policy
Counselling Guidelines
Merton Hall Excursions and Camps Policy
Morris Hall Excursions and Camps Policy
Working with Children Check Policy
Privacy Policy
Trips and Tours Policy
Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct
MGGS Recruitment Guidelines
HR Employment Section on MGGS website
Appendix 1 – Child Safety Volunteer Agreement

CHILD SAFETY: VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Melbourne Girls Grammar values and appreciates the contribution of its volunteers.

All volunteers at Melbourne Girls Grammar (MGGS) are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms our School values of courage, compassion, integrity, and self-discipline. They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

This Agreement forms part of MGGS’s commitment to child safety and covers all volunteers who will undertake child-connected work in the MGGS school environment.

The Volunteer named in the schedule has offered to undertake volunteer duties for MGGS on the following basis:

1. The Volunteer has offered to perform the volunteer duties for MGGS on a voluntary basis and not to receive any payment or remuneration for such work, except reimbursement for any out of pocket expenses agreed to by MGGS.

2. The Volunteer will report to, and accept all reasonable instructions from, the Contact person named in the schedule in relation to the volunteer duties, compliance with MGGS's policies and for health and safety matters. The Contact person will also set the Volunteer's expected hours of work and any changes to the volunteer duties.

3. Prior to undertaking the volunteer duties and as part of its child safety commitment, MGGS requires the Volunteer to provide the information and documentation set out in the schedule.

4. The Volunteer will read and comply with the following policies of MGGS and any other policies brought to the Volunteer's attention:
   - Child Safety Policy
   - Child Safety Code of Conduct
   - Child Safety – Response and Reporting Procedure

5. The Volunteer will:
   - undertake any induction or training program that MGGS considers necessary in relation to the volunteer duties including in relation to child safety
   - report to the Volunteer's Contact person any concerns or hazards that the Volunteer considers present a health and safety issue to persons attending MGGS, including its students
   - inform MGGS in a timely manner any desire or need to change or cease the volunteer duties or the hours of work being contributed to MGGS
   - at all times comply with the law when undertaking the volunteer duties and when in the MGGS School environment
   - use any property or equipment of MGGS in a safe manner
   - while undertaking the volunteer duties take all reasonable care for the Volunteer's safety and for the safety of others.

6. While this Agreement sets out the requirements of MGGS in relation to its volunteers, it is not intended to be a legally binding agreement and either party may cancel this Agreement at any time.
7. Any intellectual property created by the Volunteer while undertaking the volunteer duties will belong to MGGS.

8. MGGS will comply with its Privacy policy in relation to any personal information collected about the Volunteer for the purpose of this Agreement.

9. Definitions

**Child**
A student enrolled at MGGS and who is under the age of 18 years.

**Child-connected work**
This is work that is authorised by MGGS that is performed by an adult in the MGGS school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**Child safety**
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**
The MGGS school environment is any physical or virtual place that was made available or authorised by MGGS for use by a child during or outside school hours, and includes:

(a) our Morris Hall Campus in Caroline Street, South Yarra

(b) our Merton Hall Campus, Early Learning and Boarding House facilities in Anderson Street, South Yarra

(c) online school environments including email and intranet systems

other locations provided by MGGS for a child's use, including locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

I have read and agree to this Volunteer Agreement:

________________________________________
Signature of Volunteer

Date:
### SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Volunteer:</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone/mobile:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer duties:</td>
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<td>MGGS contact person:</td>
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| Required documentation: | □ Proof of identity  
□ Working with Children Check  
□ National Police Record Check  
□ Proof of any relevant qualifications requested by MGGS  
□ History of work involving children  
□ References that address the Volunteer's suitability for the volunteer duties and working with children. |