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RELATED DOCUMENTS:	Legislation: Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools Child Safe Standards (2022) Privacy and Data Protection Act (amended) 2014 (Vic) Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
	Documents: PPP036 Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy PPP052 Duty of Care Guidelines PPP083 Staff Code of Conduct PPP083a Staff Code of Conduct - Child Safety PPP095 Disciplinary Management Guidelines PPP149 Student Code of Conduct PPP149b Student Code of Conduct - addendum PPP161 Risk Management Framework PPP141 Complaints Resolution procedure PPP141a SWTAFE Making a Complaint (Easy English) PPP106 Police and Working with Children Check PPP105 Recruitment and Selection Guidelines PPP170 SWDS Responding to Abuse and Neglect Guidelines PPP284 Reportable Conduct Scheme Guidelines PPP202 Professional Boundaries PPP284 Reportable Conduct Scheme Guidelines PPP292 Child Safe Incidents – Responding and Reporting Procedure SWTAFE Induction and Annual Corporate Refresher Child Safe Standards – VRQA guidelines and resources Department of Education and Training – ‘Child Protect’ resources ‘Commission for Children and Young People’ Resources Child Safe Standards – Information for Young People Child Safe Standards Translated Resources Reportable Conduct Scheme

1. Introduction

South West TAFE (SWTAFE or the ‘Organisation’) has a zero tolerance to child abuse and is committed to embedding an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing. This guideline demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring that children are safe when in the care of the organisation, and provides an outline of the procedures and practices implemented to keep everyone safe from harm, including all forms of abuse.

2. Purpose

This guideline establishes mandatory requirements to ensure the safety, wellbeing and participation of all children engaged with SWTAFE.

It puts into operation requirements under:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022)
- Relevant legislation and reporting obligations
- RTO governance, risk and training delivery systems

3. Scope:

This guideline applies to:

- All staff, contractors, volunteers and Board members
- Third-party providers and host employers
- All training delivery environments (classroom, workplace, online, offsite)

4. Commitment to Child Safety

South West TAFE:

- Has zero tolerance for child abuse
- Actively embeds a child safe culture
- Places child safety above all other organisational priorities
- Requires all personnel to share responsibility for safety
- Aligns to the Victorian Child safe Standards (2022)

5. Definitions

For the purposes of implementing a child safe culture and environment, a child is inclusive of anyone under the age of 18 years of age. It is not restricted to students of South West TAFE.

Child	Any person under 18 years
Mandatory Reporting	<p>Legal requirement to report certain abuse concerns All mandatory reporters must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse ▪ the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type. <p>It is a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances.</p> <p>Mandatory reporters must also follow the Four Critical Actions to ensure they fulfil all their legal obligations.</p>
Reasonable Belief	A belief based on observable indicators or disclosure
Reportable Conduct	Reportable conduct is conduct against a 'Child'. It is a scheme administered by The Social Services Regulator (SSR) is an independent statutory authority that exists to safeguard the rights of children and young people as well as people who use social services in Victoria. For full details, refer to PPP284 Reportable Conduct Scheme Guidelines and Reportable Conduct Scheme

Misconduct	Misconduct may be committed against a 'Child' or an adult. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A breach of professional standards▪ A breach of a Code of Conduct▪ Criminal Conduct eg: theft or fraud.
Harmful Sexual Behaviours	Age-inappropriate or unsafe sexual behaviour involving children or young people

6. Child Safety & Wellbeing Principles

SWTAFE commits to:

- The best interests of the child are paramount
- Child safety is everyone's responsibility
- Children are respected, heard and involved
- Risks are identified, assessed and controlled
- Unsafe behaviour is prevented, identified and addressed
- Continuous improvement is embedded and evidenced

7. Children's Voice and Participation

Children and young people are supported to:

- Express views about safety and wellbeing
- Participate in decisions that affect them
- Raise concerns safely and without fear

Mechanisms include:

- Age-appropriate surveys
- Facilitated feedback opportunities
- Accessible complaints and reporting channels

Feedback is:

- Reviewed systematically
- Used to improve systems and practices

8. Cultural Safety and Inclusion

SWTAFE provides culturally safe environments for:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with disability
- LGBTQIA+ young people

SWTAFE will:

- Embed inclusive practices in training delivery
- Provide culturally appropriate support
- Train staff in cultural safety
- Identify and manage cultural safety risks

9. Staff Behaviour Expectations (Mandatory)

Minimum Behaviour Requirements

All staff must:

- maintain professional boundaries (see PPP202)
- avoid situations of isolation with a child where possible
- use SWTAFE approved communication channels only
- immediately report concerns

Prohibited behaviours include:

- personal or secret communication with a child
- inappropriate physical contact
- favouritism or grooming behaviours

Breaches

Failure to comply with this guideline may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Employment termination
- Referral to external authorities such as Victoria Police

Where a SWTAFE employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within these Guidelines, the organisation may start a disciplinary process for a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct PPP083 and Code of Conduct – Child Safety PPP083a. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the CEO is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within these Guidelines the concerned party is advised to contact the Board Chair or an external organisation such as the Victorian Ombudsman. SWTAFE staff can also report through the Speak Up service (refer to ECHO for contact details).

10. Reporting and Mandatory Reporting (see appendix1 - flow chart)

(Refer to PPP292 for full response procedures)

If you believe a child is at risk:

- 1 Ensure the child is safe
- 2 Report immediately to: - Manager of Student Engagement and Support or a Child Safety Contact Officer.
- 3 Where required, report directly to: - Victoria Police (000 in emergency) - DFFH Child Protection

Key requirements:

- Do not delay reporting
- Proof is not required
- Failure to report may breach legal obligations
- All concerns must be reported – proof is not required

11. Student Complaints and Child-Friendly Reporting

SWTAFE provides student complaints processes that are:

- Accessible and easy to understand
- Available in multiple formats
- Explained during induction
- Supported by staff if needed

Children/young people can report:

- Verbally
- Online

- Through trusted staff

All complaints are:

- Taken seriously
- Managed promptly
- Recorded and reviewed

12. Risk Management

Child safety risks are formally identified, assessed and controlled through the SWTAFE Risk Management Framework.

Risk assessments include:

- training delivery environments (classroom, online, workplace)
- Communal spaces on every campus where interaction with other young people and adults may occur
- one-to-one interactions
- offsite and third-party delivery
- digital communication and platforms
- student cohort vulnerability

All risks:

- Are documented in the SWTAFE risk register
- Have controls implemented
- Are monitored and reviewed regularly

13. Third Party Requirements

Where SWTAFE engages a Third Party to provide a service including non – delivery services, all third parties must:

- Comply with SWTAFE child safety requirements
- Demonstrate agreement with controls prior to engagement
- Hold relevant screening (e.g. WWCC)
- Complete an induction and ongoing monitoring
- Report incidents immediately in line with SWTAFE procedures

Child safety requirements are included in all contracts and agreements. Non-compliance may result in termination

14. Recruiting, Screening and Training

SWTAFE ensures all personnel working with children/young people:

- Are assessed for suitability
- Hold required checks (WWCC, police check, NDIS Clearance)
- Undergo reference checks
- Complete induction and training

As a part of the SWTAFE's induction process, all staff, volunteers and Board Members are required to participate in annual training on child safety. All training participation is recorded and monitored.

On commencement of employment, all staff are required to sign a Staff Code of Conduct - Child Safety PPP083a which recognises the critical role that staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of employees, volunteers, and contractors for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect. On an annual basis staff complete a mandatory training module and recommit to abiding by the Code.

SWTAFE staff teaching on secondary school sites are required to have Victorian Institute of Teaching registration under 'Permission to Teach (VET).

Our Recruitment and Selection Guidelines PPP105 specify the requirement to interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) to be submitted.

Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for staff and volunteer positions, as per our recruitment practices.

15. Training Delivery Controls

Child safety is embedded in:

- Training and Assessment Strategies (TAS)
- Delivery planning
- Workplace learning arrangements
- Trainer/assessor responsibilities

The TAS must include documented child safety considerations and controls. Controls ensure safe learning environments across all delivery modes.

16. Governance and Accountability

SWTAFE Board

- Ensures systems and resources are in place
- Monitors child safety performance

CEO

- Accountable for implementation
- Ensures effective culture and controls

Executive and Leadership Management

- Monitor risks, incidents and compliance
- Drive continuous improvement

Primary Child Safety Officer

- Coordinates responses
- Provides guidance

Child Safety Contact Officers

- Responsible for championing child safety and wellbeing
- Assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

17. Communication

SWTAFE communicates child safety through:

- Student induction
- Senior Secondary Student Handbook
- Student News
- Public website and materials
- Visible messaging across campuses and online

SWTAFE engages families and communities through:

- Targeted communication strategies
- Accessible and translated resources
- Opportunities for feedback and input

18. Record Keeping

SWTAFE maintains records of:

- Complaints and incidents
- Investigations and actions

- Risk assessments

Records are:

- Secure and confidential
- Managed in line with legislative requirements
- Used to identify trends and improve systems

Data on complaints, investigations or incidents relating to Child Safety is collected in a centralised secure Register and managed in-line with legislative and privacy requirements. Actions taken to investigate and resolve the issue are recorded. Any reporting to third parties will only use de-identified data.

19. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

SWTAFE monitors child safety through:

- Incident and complaint data
- Risk reporting
- Internal audits
- Feedback from young people

Outcomes:

- Are reported to leadership and the Board
- Inform improvements to policy, procedure and training

Where data indicates systemic issues and causes items will be added to the Continuous Improvement Register for further action.

20. Review

This Guideline is:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated following incidents or legislative changes

21. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

SWTAFE is committed to making diversity, equity and inclusion part of everything we do, including in the implementation of this policy/procedure/guideline. For more information, please visit the 'Our Values' page on our [website](#) [external] or the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Homepage on ECHO [internal]. [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion \(DEI\)](#)

22. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

South West TAFE is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a Child Safe Program designed to keep children safe within our organisation. For Child Safe key documents, resources, contact officer details please go to: [Child Safe Commitment](#)

Appendix 1.

