

Child Safety Officers

Endorsed by Executive Leadership Team October 2022

Approved by the College Board October 2022



At Cornish College we have appointed Child Safety Officers.

These officers are a key team of trained staff for contact when students, parents, other teachers or anyone in our community that has any concerns about the safety of a child in our care.

The officers also take a lead on developing our Child Safety Policy, risk management and, ultimately, a positive culture of child safety.

It is important you know who our Child Safety Officers are:

Executive Leadership Team

Principal	Nicola Forrest
Deputy Principal – Head of Secondary	Sarah Dodd
Deputy Principal – Head of Primary	Tim Edmonds
Deputy Principal – Student Learning	Laurent Julicher
Director of Early Learning Centre	Jeanette Russell
Director of Community Relations	Dennis Freeman
Director of Operations	Matthew Arnott

Academic Care Team Leaders

Primary	Glenn Hagart
Primary	Darren Thresher
Year 7	Paige Armao
Year 8	Amy Miller
Year 9	Natasha Keetley
Year 10	Julie Cooper
Years 11 & 12	Geoff Holland

Student Support Services

Inclusive Education Team Leader	Virginia Sugars
Inclusive Education Teacher	Zoe Mazoletti
School Psychologist	Faye Crouch
School Psychologist	Jennifer Conry
Director of Wellbeing	Rose Lyons

Student Agency Leader

Jodie Piotrowski

Please talk to any of our Child Safety Officers if you have any questions or concerns about child safety.

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Child Safety Officer Role

Background

The identification of Child Safety Officers provides students, staff and parents with clearly identifiable “go-to” people in the event of a suspected child safety issue.

However, this does not remove the statutory obligation of all adults to report child abuse as per Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), under Mandatory Reporting requirements or other reporting legislation, nor does it take away the opportunities of any child to speak to any member of staff should they have concerns.

Responsibilities

Child Safety Officers should be able to:

Provide authoritative advice

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety
- Liaise with the Principal and College leaders to maintain visibility of child safety
- Lead the development of the College’s child safety culture, sensitive to the diverse needs in the community, and provide coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety
- Have an understanding of how the Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and Community Service organisations, such as Orange Door, conduct a child protection case conference, and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively if required to do so

Raise awareness

- Ensure the school’s Child Safety Policy is known by staff and the school community and used appropriately
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking into account their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them
- Ensure each member of staff is aware and understands the College’s Child Safety Policy, reporting procedures and the College’s Code of Conduct

Guide child safety incident management and reporting

- Promptly manage the school’s response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse and ensure the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously
- Respond appropriately and sensitively to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse and follow the College and statutory procedures including:
 - Informing appropriate authorities
 - Supporting the child connected to alleged child abuse
 - Being aware of diverse community needs including cultural diversity, students with additional needs, English language fluency, LGBTQIA+ status
 - Making, securing and retaining records of the allegation of child abuse and the College’s response to it (as detailed in the College’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Records Management Policy)

How Cornish College Staff Respond to Concerns of Child Abuse, Neglect, or Child Safety



What we know:

Abuse is wrong – morally, socially and legally – and is never the child's fault

The prevention of child abuse is everyone's responsibility

Offenders can be anyone

It is rare for children to lie about child abuse – the average age of disclosure is 24 years old 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually abused in their lifetime (Royal Commission, 2014)

At the time of disclosure:

If possible, have another person with you – listen, listen, listen

Be sensitive to diverse needs and cultural differences

Declare that if you feel the student is in danger, this information will need to be passed on

Step 1: Responding to concerns

If you have any concern or suspicion (on reasonable grounds) that a child may be experiencing any form of abuse, neglect, sexual offending, psychological or emotional harm, physical injury, exposure to family violence or grooming, you should immediately raise your concerns with one of the Child Safety Officers.

- Reasonable grounds
- Have you formed the belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm?
- Are you in doubt about the child's safety and the parents'/carers' ability to protect the child?

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 000

Step 2: Discuss concerns and gather and record information

Our Child Safety Officers will:

- Listen to your concerns
- Protect the privacy of the person reporting where appropriate
- Support the child connected to alleged child abuse
- Assist with recording your observations using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Form](#)
- Determine if a report is to be made or further advice should be sought from Orange Door
- Consult with a member of the Executive Leadership Team
- Assist with making the report, call and reporting to the Principal

(Further details on child safety reports and record keeping refer to the [Records Management Policy](#)).

Please note that consulting with a Child Safety Officer does not change any legal obligation you have under legislation to *report to an external authority*, such as Victoria Police or Child Protection Services.

For more information refer to [Legal Obligations to Report](#) section below.

Contact details

Victoria Police 000 (24 hours)

Child Protection Services, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

South Division Intake 1300 655 795 (8.45am – 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

After hours emergency services 13 12 78 (24 hours)

Orange Door 1800 319 35

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TO REPORT

August 2022



Known as	Source of Obligation	Documented in our policies	Relates to	Report to	College Process	Applies when
Mandatory Reporting	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYFA) (section 184)	Mandatory Reporting Policy applies to principals, teachers, nurses, counsellors and ministers of religion.	A situation where a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection from significant harm (from physical injury or sexual abuse)	DFFH Child Protection	Also please report the concern to the Principal, or to a Child Safety Officer. You must be satisfied that a report has been made to DFFH Child Protection before your obligation to report is discharged.	A Mandatory Report must be made when you form a belief that a child is in need of protection where the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.
Failure to Report and Failure to Protect	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)	The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence (Failure to Protect) Policy applies to all adults	<p>Failure to Report: A belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person aged 18 years or over.</p> <p>Failure to Protect: A child under the age of 16 is at risk of a sexual offence.</p>	Police, unless a report has been made to Child Protection and there is no further information to provide	Notify the Principal or a Child Safety Officer	<p>Failure to Report: Anyone aged 18+ years, if they believe that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person aged 18 years or over.</p> <p>Failure to Protect: A person in a position of authority has a duty to act immediately to reduce or remove a risk, where a child under the age of 16 is at risk of a sexual offence.</p> <p>The Crimes Act sets out what is a sexual offence, this includes: rape, indecent assault, incest, sexual penetration, grooming a child, or a person who has the care, supervision or authority of a child (aged under 16) for sexual conduct with the child, and also encouraging a child to engage in, or be involved in, sexual activity. A sexual offence includes an attempted sexual offence.</p>

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Known as	Source of Obligation	Documented in our policies	Relates to	Report to	College Process	Applies when
Reportable Conduct	Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)	Reportable Conduct of Staff Volunteers and Others Policy	Allegations against an employee (and any person providing a service to the College, including a contractor or volunteer).	Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)	Please report the concern to the Principal. Any person may disclose a reportable allegation to the CCYP, but the Principal is required by law to notify the CCYP.	A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence and been commenced or concluded; or Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or Significant neglect of a child. "Sexual misconduct" includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - behaviour, physical contact or speech or other communication of a sexual nature, for example 'sexting'; - inappropriate touching or physical contact; - grooming behaviour; and - voyeurism.
Child Safe Standards	Ministerial Order 1359 & Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct	All staff, students, and volunteers. The obligations include regular professional learning for staff, developing a College culture which supports and listens to students, and providing ongoing age-appropriate training for students.	(See other policies for reporting obligations)	In accordance with the various policies, report any concerns to the Principal or Child Safety Officer, and at times to other authorities.	We must have an inclusive culture, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety - a child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child - a child safety code of conduct - screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse - procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks

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August 2022



Known as	Source of Obligation	Documented in our policies	Relates to	Report to	College Process	Applies when
						<p>of child abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strategies to promote child participation and - empowerment.
Duty of Care		Student Duty of Care Policy	Our role, which requires us to protect children under our care from harm that is reasonably foreseeable.	DFFH Child Protection or Child First (Orange Door). Follow the Four Critical Actions.	Notify the Principal. Follow the PROTECT Four Critical Actions.	All school staff have a duty of care to protect children under our care from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. We have a duty of care towards all students involved in student sexual behaviour, including students exhibiting concerning/harmful behaviours, students impacted by such behaviours, and any other students in the school who may have witnessed and/or been affected by the sexual behaviour.
Teacher Misconduct	Victorian Institute of Teaching		College to notify VIT if it becomes aware that a teacher has been charged with, or convicted or found guilty of, these criminal offences.	Victorian Institute of Teaching	Registered teachers must report to the Principal immediately.	Registered teachers must notify the Principal and VIT if they become aware that a teacher has been charged with, or convicted or found guilty of, these criminal offences.