

# SHOLEM ALEICHEM COLLEGE

## Child Protection and Safety Program

### 2. Child Protection Policy

#### 2.1 Background

The College is committed to a system that ensures that all staff act for the welfare of each child and in accordance with their statutory obligations. The safety and wellbeing of children are the paramount considerations. Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, harm or the threat of harm at all times. This Child Protection Policy covers duty of care obligations, all types of reporting (including Mandatory Reporting), staff codes of conduct and other related guidelines.

This Child Protection Policy is approved by College Council.

#### 2.2 Purpose

Our Child Protection Policy was written to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students. Our College is committed to child safety. It has developed policies and practices to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

Our Child Protection Policy outlines the key elements of our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 (which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments) and to the College as a child safe organisation. It informs the College community about everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards students and guides the policies, processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work, which are set out in the College's Child Safety and Protection Program.

The Child Protection and Safety Program is the name given to the full collection of policies and procedures that assist the College to be a child safe organisation and to meet the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 and the National Principles. It includes policies and procedures for:

- responding to and reporting child safety incidents and concerns
- child safe human resources management (including Working With Children Check, WWCC)
- participation and empowerment of students
- informing and involving families and relevant communities in child safeguarding issues
- equity and diversity
- child safeguarding risk management strategies
- strategies for embedding a culture of child safety at the College and
- regular reviews and continuous improvement of Child safety and protection policies, procedures and practices.

Sholem Aleichem College's Child Protection Policy is to be read and understood in conjunction with, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission (National Principles).

The Child Protection Policy provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order No 1359  
<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/MinOrder1359childdsafe.pdf>
- the implementation of the National Principles  
[https://childdsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National\\_Principles\\_for\\_Child\\_Safe\\_Organisations2019.pdf](https://childdsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf)
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosure and Suspicions of Child Abuse (PROTECT Four Critical Actions), that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the College  
[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf)
- the creation of a safe and supportive College environment and a positive and robust child safe culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the College
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and child safety in Victoria.

### **2.3 Scope**

The College's Child Protection Policy applies to all adults in the College community, whether or not their work involves direct contact with students, including:

- Staff and Direct Contact Contractors (including External Education Providers) who are "school staff" within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359
- other types of Contractors
- Volunteers
- Visitors

### **2.4 Definitions**

The following definitions apply to, and are used throughout, the Child Protection and Safety Program.

#### **Child Safe and Child Safety**

Where the phrase "child safe" or "child safety" is used in our Child Protection and Safety Program it refers to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, which includes but goes further than the protection of them from abuse and other harm.

#### **Child and Young Person**

A child and young person is defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and for the purposes of our Child Protection and Safety Program, as a person who is under the age of 18 years.

#### **Student**

Where the term "student" is used in this Program, it refers to all students enrolled at the College, including those aged 18 and above.

## Child Abuse and Other Harm

“Child abuse and other harm” is not a defined term in Victorian law. However, various sources of legislation provide a definition of “child abuse” as well as other concepts and conduct which, together, provide guidance as to what constitutes child abuse and other harm in Victoria.

For the purposes of this Program, the phrase “child abuse and other harm” refers to incidents of or concerns about, including concerns about a risk of, physical, sexual, psychological and emotional harm, neglect, grooming and exposure to family violence, regardless of by whom or how this harm occurs.

## Child Safety Incident or Concern

For the purposes of our Child Protection and Safety Program, a “child safety incident or concern” means an incident of, or a concern about:

- “child abuse” as defined in Ministerial Order 1359, the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (CWS Act). These define “child abuse” as:
  - a sexual offence against a child
  - the criminal offence of grooming (which includes grooming of a child or of a person with care, supervision or responsibility for the child with the intention of facilitating the child being engaged or involved in the commission of a sexual offence)
  - the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or “serious” emotional or psychological harm\*
  - the “serious” neglect of a child\*
- a child being “in need of protection” as defined in the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act), which includes:
  - abandonment of the child by their parents and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child
  - the child’s parents are dead or incapacitated and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child
  - “significant” harm as a result of physical injury, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child\*
  - “significant” harm as a result of sexual abuse (including likely future sexual abuse as a result of grooming), from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child\*
  - “significant” emotional or psychological harm, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child\*
  - “significant” neglect by the child’s parents\*
- “reportable conduct” as defined in the CWS Act, which means conduct by an employee (whether in the course of their employment or not) involving:
  - a sexual offence committed against or in the presence of a child
  - sexual misconduct committed against or in the presence of a child
  - physical violence committed against or in the presence of a child
  - any behaviour that causes “significant” emotional or psychological harm to a child\*
  - “significant” neglect of a child\*
  - a criminal offence against a child as set out in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as:
    - sexual penetration or sexual assault of, or sexual activity in the presence of, a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender

- grooming a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender
  - grooming an adult who has a child under their care, supervision or authority
  - encouraging a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the offender's care, supervision or authority to be involved in sexual activity
  - a practice to change or suppress a child's sexual orientation or gender identity, which prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)
- a breach of our Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct, such as:
    - a teacher engaging in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not their own child
    - a Volunteer sports coach engaging in inappropriate online personal communications with a student
    - a Contractor music tutor publishing online photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.

\* "Serious" emotional or psychological harm and "serious" neglect involve harm that has a lasting permanent effect. "Significant" emotional or psychological harm and "significant" neglect involve harm that is more than trivial or insignificant but need not be as high as "serious" and need not have a lasting permanent effect.

#### Child Safety Incidents or Concerns "Involving" the Principal

Throughout this Child Protection and Safety Program, the Principal is given specific responsibilities for receiving and managing internal reports, complaints, disclosures or allegations of child safety incidents or concerns that involve the College or its Staff, Volunteers or Contractors.

However, where the child safety incident or concern involves or is alleged to involve the Principal or where a Child safety and protection-related complaint is made about the Principal, the President of the Council or their delegate responsible for receiving and managing these reports, complaints, disclosures or allegations.

For the purposes of these policies and procedures, a child safety incident, concern, complaint or allegation "involves" the Principal if:

- the Principal is the perpetrator of the child safety incident or concern, or is otherwise the subject of the complaint or allegation about a child a safety incident or concern
- the Principal has, or is alleged to have, mishandled a child safety incident, concern, complaint or allegation
- the Principal is otherwise involved in the chain of events surround the child safety incident or concern (for example, they are a witness to the child safety incident)
- the Principal has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in receiving or managing the internal report, complaint or allegation (for example, they are related to the alleged victim or the alleged perpetrator).

#### Child-Connected Work

Ministerial Order 1359 defines "child-connected work" as "work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present".

The engagement or employment of all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors at the College (other than the Principal) is undertaken by the Principal/ Chief Operating Officer (COO) on behalf of College Council.

This means that all staff members, including teaching and non-teaching Staff, are engaged in child-connected work.

Under this definition, the following Volunteers and Contractors are also engaged in child-connected work:

- all adult Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors
- adult Regular Volunteers/Contractors who work when children are present or expected to be present

adult Casual Volunteers/Contractors who work when children are present or expected to be present.

### Members of the College Community

Throughout the College's Child Protection and Safety Program, certain groups of people in the College community are identified for the purposes of assigning roles, responsibilities and obligations. To ensure clarity, the following terms are used consistently throughout the Program and have the following meanings:

#### College Council

- College Council is the College's "governing authority" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.
- College Council includes all members irrespective of their level of interaction with students or College policy.
- The Principal

With the exception of where the Principal has specific roles and responsibilities and is therefore expressly identified, the Principal will be included as a staff member for the purposes of the Child Protection and Safety Program.

#### School Staff

"School staff" is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359. It defines "school staff" as "an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

The engagement or employment of all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors at the College (other than the Principal) is undertaken by the Principal and Chief Operating Officer on behalf of College Council.

This means that the phrase "school staff" includes all Staff, all Volunteers and all Contractors at the College, no matter the manner or frequency of their engagement or their age.

"School staff", for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359, is therefore broader in scope than the terms "Staff" and "staff members" as set out below.

## Staff and Staff Members

The terms “Staff” and “staff members” include all persons employed by the College whether on a permanent, temporary or casual basis. These terms include all teaching and non-teaching Staff and, unless otherwise stated, the Principal.

All “staff members” are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Where differentiation between teachers and non-teaching Staff is required, it will be expressly stated within the policy or procedure itself.

Where the term “staff members” is extended to include other members of the College community such as Volunteers or Contractors, this will be expressly stated within the policy or procedure itself.

## Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Volunteers

A Volunteer is a person who works without payment or financial reward for the College. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider College or local community. Volunteers make a considerable contribution to the College community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others.

All Volunteers are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Sholem Aleichem College has identified three categories of Volunteers, based on the level and frequency of their interaction with students. Volunteers’ responsibilities and obligations under the Child Protection and Safety Program may depend on their category. The categories of Volunteer are:

- Direct Contact Volunteers
- Regular Volunteers
- Casual Volunteers

Where the term “Volunteer” is used, it captures “Direct Contact Volunteers”, “Regular Volunteers” and “Casual Volunteers”.

## Direct Contact Volunteer

Direct Contact Volunteers are volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) defines “direct contact” in section 3 as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

All Direct Contact Volunteers (other than those who are themselves children) are engaged in child-connected work within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Direct Contact Volunteers may have direct contact with students in circumstances where:

- they may have limited supervision by College Staff in their role

- they may be left alone, one-on-one, with a student (for example, 1:1 tutoring or learning support)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a student (for example, coaching a sports team, helping with a drama production, or regularly working in a canteen or library)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact could create a potential risk to the safety of a student (for example, responsibility for a group of students during an excursion without a member of Staff present).

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteers include individuals who:

- attend a College camp or excursion
- assist a student during a learning activity
- coach, manage, or assist with the coaching or managing, of sports at the College
- assist with theatre or music productions
- volunteer parent assisting with Sholem Aleichem College Parents Association (SACPA) events and programs

Due to the nature of Direct Contact Volunteers' contact with students, they will have more comprehensive Child safety and protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection and Safety Program.

### Regular Volunteer

Regular Volunteers are individuals who provide volunteer services to the College, more than seven times in any one year, but are not a Direct Contact Volunteer. They may have some indirect or incidental contact with students when providing their services.

Regular Volunteers (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any College environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359.

Regular Volunteers who work in any College environment while children are not present or are not expected to be present are not engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Examples of Regular Volunteers include individuals who volunteer more than seven times per year:

- in the College administrative office (other than in a role that has direct contact with students)
- on College advisory committees or advisory councils and do not have direct contact (such as by post, telephone or email) with students while doing so.
- Due to the regular nature of Regular Volunteers' attendance at the College or College events, even though their contact with students may be indirect or limited, they will have some Child safety and protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection and Safety Program.

### Casual Volunteer

Casual Volunteers are individuals who provide volunteer services to the College, seven times or less in any one year, but are not a Direct Contact Volunteer. They may have indirect or incidental contact with students when providing their services but only in circumstances where they:

- are not likely to be left alone, one-on-one, with a student

- a reasonable person would not consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a student
- a reasonable person would not consider the contact to create a risk to the safety of a student.

Casual Volunteers (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any College environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in “child-connected work” within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359.

Casual Volunteers who work in any College environment while children are not present or are not expected to be present are not engaged in “child-connected work” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Examples of Casual Volunteers include individuals who, in the circumstance described above, volunteer seven times or less in any one year:

- Assisting with Jewish festivals and celebrations
- at a working bee to landscape a College garden
- on a stall such as Mother’s Day
- on a College BBQ at a sporting event
- in the College Main Reception
- fundraising events.

Due to the limited nature of Casual Volunteers’ contact with students, they do not have the same comprehensive role, responsibilities, and obligations as College staff members or Direct Contact or Regular Volunteers and are instead treated as Visitors.

#### Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Contractors

On occasion it may be necessary for the College to engage outside, independent contractors to perform specific tasks. These Contractors are not employees of Sholem Aleichem College. Contractors may include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, tutors, sports coaches, External Education Providers and cleaners.

Sholem Aleichem College has identified three categories of Contractors, based on the level and frequency of their interaction with students. Contractors’ responsibilities and obligations under the Child Protection and Safety Program may depend on their category. These categories are:

- Direct Contact Contractors
- Regular Contractors
- Casual Contractors

Where the term “Contractor” is used, it captures “Direct Contact Contractors”, “Regular Contractors” and “Casual Contractors”.

#### Direct Contact Contractors

Direct Contact Contractors are individuals who provide contractor services to the College where, in the normal course of providing the services, they could potentially have direct contact with students in circumstances where they:

- may be left alone, one-on-one, with a student (for example, 1:1 tutor or learning support)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a student (for example, casual teacher, coach of a sports team, music tutor, canteen worker, regular maintenance worker)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact could create a potential risk to the safety of a student (for example, casual teacher, music tutor).



All Direct Contact Contractors (other than those who are themselves children) are engaged in child-connected work within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Examples of Direct Contact Contractors may include:

- maintenance workers who regularly work at times when students are present
- tutors
- specialist music or drama teachers
- casual teachers
- sporting team coaches
- outdoor education specialists
- physical education service providers
- allied health professionals.

This also includes music tutors and other extra-curricular tutors and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.

Due to the nature of Direct Contact Contractors' contact with students, they will have more comprehensive Child safety and protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection and Safety Program.

#### Regular Contractor

Regular Contractors are individuals who provide contractor services to the College more than seven times in any one year and are not Direct Contact Contractors. They may have some indirect or limited contact with students when providing their services.

Regular Contractors (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any College environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359.

Regular Contractors who work in any College environment while children are not present or are not expected to be present are not engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Examples of Regular Contractors may include:

- consultants
- umpires, referees or lines people at sporting events
- maintenance workers/ cleaners who regularly work at times when students are not expected to be present
- regular caterers for Staff events.

Due to the regular nature of Regular Contractors' attendance at the College or College events, even though their contact with students may be indirect or limited, they will have some Child safety and protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection and Safety Program.

#### Casual Contractor

Casual Contractors are individuals who provide contractor services to the College, seven times or less in any one year, during which they may have indirect or limited contact with students, but only in circumstances where they:

- are not left alone, one-on-one, with a student
- a reasonable person would not consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship or trust with a student
- a reasonable person would not consider the contact to create a risk to the safety of a student.

Casual Contractors (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any College environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in “child-connected work” within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359.

Casual Contractors who work in any College environment while children are not present or are not expected to be present are not engaged in “child-connected work” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Examples of Casual Contractors may include individuals who, less than seven times a year:

- provide one-off emergency maintenance work
- give a speech, performance or presentation at the College
- aid with activities at a College sports day.

Due to the limited nature of Casual Contractors’ contact with students, they do not have the same comprehensive role, responsibilities and obligations as College staff members or Direct Contact or Regular Contractors and are instead treated as Visitors.

#### External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College. For the purposes of our Child Protection and Safety Program, External Education Providers are considered Direct Contact Contractors.

#### Visitors

The term “visitor” refers to any adult who attends a College event or in a College environment on a one-off or casual basis. Examples of visitors include, but are not limited to:

- Casual Volunteers
- Casual Contractors
- parents, carers and other adult family members of students, when they are attending College events or in a College environment
- people invited by the College or a staff member to attend a College event or to be in a College environment
- people who attend a College environment for commercial purposes, such as for deliveries or sales purposes.

#### The College Environment

The “College Environment” means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the Council for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- the College campus
- online College environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the College for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events).

### **2.5 Observation of Abuse and Other Harm Indicators**

The different types of child abuse and their key indicators are set out below.

### Identifying child abuse

#### Physical violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of objects.

Physical indicators include (but are not limited to):

- unexplained bruises, burns or welts
- fractured bones, sprains or dislocation
- cuts, grazes or scratches
- ligature or bite marks
- bald patches or hair missing in tufts
- missing or loosened teeth
- poisoning or medication overdose.

Behavioural indicators include (but are not limited to):

- inconsistent, vague or unlikely explanations of an injury
- wariness, fear or distrust of adults
- avoidance of physical contact
- disproportionate reactions or limited emotion displayed when hurt or threatened
- wearing clothing that is unsuitable for the weather conditions (to hide injuries)
- unexplained absences and decline in academic performance
- substance abuse, self-harm or suicide attempts.

#### Sexual offences

Sexual offences occur when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.

Physical indicators include (but are not limited to):

- bruising, bleeding or discharge from the genital or rectal area
- signs of pain, itching or discomfort in the genital or rectal area
- presence of sexually transmitted diseases
- frequent urinary tract infections
- pregnancy (actual or suspected)
- self-mutilation.

Behavioural indicators include (but are not limited to):

- displaying age-inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge
- promiscuity or inappropriate expressions of affection
- sudden fears of specific places or particular adults
- obsessive and compulsive washing

- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea
- sleeping difficulties
- poor self-care or personal hygiene
- regressive behaviours such as bedwetting and speech loss
- substance abuse, self-harm or suicide attempts.

### Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation or by threats of violence. It can include derogatory name-calling, put-downs or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the child's behaviour is disturbed and/or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Physical indicators include (but are not limited to):

- delays in emotional, mental or physical development
- speech impairments such as stuttering or being selectively mute
- rocking, thumb-sucking or other infantile behaviours
- eating disorders.

Behavioural indicators include (but are not limited to):

- exhibiting high anxiety or symptoms of stress
- poor self-image or low self-esteem
- displaying aggressive, demanding or attention-seeking behaviour
- compulsive lying or stealing
- unexplained mood swings or depression
- poor social and interpersonal skills
- excessive neatness or cleanliness
- substance abuse, self-harm or suicide attempts.

### Serious neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations.

Physical indicators include (but are not limited to):

- frequent hunger or signs of malnutrition
- poor personal hygiene
- appearing dirty and unwashed
- lack of adequate or suitable clothing
- unattended health problems
- appearing pale and weak
- inadequate shelter or unsanitary living conditions.

Behavioural indicators include (but are not limited to):

- stealing or begging for food
- aggressive or self-destructive behaviour
- involvement in criminal activity
- poor, irregular or non-attendance at school
- refusal or reluctance to go home
- limited positive interaction with parents, carers or guardians
- poor academic performance
- substance abuse.

## 2.6 Roles and Responsibilities

Child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the College community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety, wellbeing and protection of students.

Child protection and safety is everyone's responsibility. Specific responsibilities at the College include:

### The College's Child Safety Officers

A number of staff members are nominated as the College's Child Safety Officers. They are:

Laura Clapham	College Psychologist	welfare@sholem.vic.edu.au
---------------	----------------------	---------------------------

Elana Trevaks	Director of ELC	etrevaks@sholem.vic.edu.au
---------------	-----------------	----------------------------

Our Child Safety Officers are selected based on a number of considerations, namely:

- their personal attitudes, experiences and beliefs, for example, a person who is non-judgmental, calm, resilient and demonstrates a high degree of integrity and respect for confidentiality
- their role within the College, for example, a person who has seniority and experience working with complex student and family issues at the College and someone who is readily accessible and available to all members of the College community
- their personal profile within the College, for example, a person who is approachable, who students and Staff trust and who is willing and able to respond to issues personally and sensitively.
- Our Child Safety Officers have been selected to deal with child safety incidents or concerns both sensitively and effectively.

Key responsibilities of the College's Child Safety Officers:

- having a good working knowledge of the College's Child Protection Policy and Child Protection and Safety Program
- acting as "Child Safety and Protection Champions" and ensuring a strong and sustainable child safe culture is embedded within the College
- promoting child safety issues within the College community and responding to general queries with respect to the College's Child Protection and Safety Program
- being a point of contact for Staff, or other members of the College community, raising child safety concerns within the College

- communicating the College's Child safety and protection policies and procedures to all stakeholders including students, parents/carers, and through HR to Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- on behalf of College Council and the Leadership Team, ensuring that the College's Child Protection and Safety Program is being effectively implemented
- on behalf of College Council and the Leadership Team, reviewing and managing particular aspects of the College's Child Protection and Safety Program, and specifically the College's procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- ensuring that the College Leadership Team, all Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors undertake Child safety and protection training so that they are able to identify signs of abuse and other harm, understand how to respond and know when to make a referral either internally or to an external agency
- together with HR inducting and managing the training of new Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, in particular aspects of the Child Protection and Safety Program, specifically our procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- ensuring that there are clear procedures to allow people to report Reportable Conduct within the College
- providing all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors with a copy of the College's Child Protection Policy, the Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct and key contact numbers for reporting child safety concerns
- where authority is delegated from the Principal, promptly managing the College's response to a child safety incident or concern, and ensuring that the incident, allegation, disclosure or suspicion is taken seriously
- offering assistance and support when a member of the College community receives or makes a disclosure of abuse or other harm
- developing processes for minor corrective issues that don't need to be reported to an outside authority.

If a Child Safety Officer cannot perform their role, for example, due to conflicts of interest or absence, these duties must be performed by either another Child Safety Officer, the Principal or Assistant Principal.

### The Senior Child Safety Officer

The College has appointed Con Roubos as the Senior Child Safety Officer.

Con Roubos                      Assistant Principal                      croubos@sholem.vic.edu.au

The Senior Child Safety Officer has an important role in the implementation and operation of our Child Protection and Safety Program and is identified in our publicly available Child Protection Policy as the individual who the wider community can contact when they have child safety concerns relating to the College.

Key responsibilities of the Senior Child Safety Officer include:

- being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community

- ensuring that other Child Safety Officers understand and comply with their key responsibilities
- ensuring that all Child Safety Officers undergo appropriate annual training in the College's Child Protection and Safety Program, their legal responsibilities, and how to appropriately respond to child safety concerns and incidents
- coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal, the Leadership Team and Sholem Aleichem College
- ensuring that the College's Child safety and protection policies and procedures are effectively implemented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

#### Sholem Aleichem College Council Responsibilities

College Council is the College's "governing authority" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359 and has ultimate responsibility for Child Protection at Sholem Aleichem College.

Where the incident or concerns involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the Council President.

College Council is responsible for:

- being made aware of child safety issues, allegations and concerns from the Principal
- ensuring that the College employs staff suitable for child connected work
- understanding the nature of the College's operations and the child safety risks associated with these operations
- ensuring that the College has appropriate resources to effectively implement its Child Protection and Safety Program
- ensuring that the College has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding child safety issues and is able to respond in a timely way to that information
- approving and reviewing the College's Child Protection and Safety Program to ensure that it has and implements processes to comply with its child safety legal and regulatory obligations
- ensuring that the College has developed and implemented ongoing monitoring processes to verify the provision and use of the resources that have been allocated to manage Child safety and protection obligations within the College and evaluate their effectiveness.
- ensuring that the College has appropriate resources to effectively implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359 and our Child Safety and Protection Program.

#### Board of Governors:

The role of the Governors of the College is to ensure adherence to the philosophy of the College as defined in the College's constitution. As part of this role they are tasked with appointing 4 Directors to the College Council. However, the Governors play no role in the day to day operation of the College and have no fiduciary responsibility or voting power on Council.

As they are responsible for the appointment of Directors, the College requires the Governors to be familiar with the Child Protection Policy and undertake the same Child Protection training that Council members are required to complete.

## The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable, for the operational management of the College, and the implementation of the Child Safety and Protection Program.

The Principal is ultimately responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that:

- the College effectively implements Child Protection and Safety Program, and effectively deploys all available resources for that purpose
- appropriate College Child Safety Officers are appointed and trained
- a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the College including by:
  - modelling the Child Protection Code of Conduct, and reinforcing high standards of child safe behaviours between adults and students and between students
  - facilitating the participation of students, families, Staff and other members of the College community in promoting and improving child safety and wellbeing at the College
  - promoting regular and open discussion of child safety and wellbeing issues within the College community
  - facilitating regular professional learning for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors about child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and preventing and responding to child safety incidents and concerns
  - creating an environment where child safety incidents, concerns and complaints are readily raised with the College and where no one is discouraged from reporting child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.
- any child safety incidents, allegations or concerns are dealt with professionally and in a timely manner
- the Council receives regular reports with respect to child safety matters
- The Council receives information, including steps taken, in response to incidents of reported allegations of suspected child abuse
- all Staff as well as Direct Contact Volunteers are suitable for performing child-connected work, and are aware of the College's Child Protection and Safety Program and trained in implementing the Program's processes and procedures
- external support is organised to assist parties following a disclosure or suspicion of harm or abuse, in cases where the child or family does not consent to the referral
- the College is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child protection.

For the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Principal is the Head of Entity who is responsible for reporting and investigating Reportable Allegations under our Reportable Conduct policy, unless the allegations involve the Principal in which case it is the Council President.

## Child Safety Team:

The Child Safety Team is comprised of the Principal, the Assistant Principal, the College Psychologist, the Head of ELC and Council Members.

The Child Safety Team must ensure that they:

- (a) promote child safety at all times



- (b) assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible
- (c) educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- (d) facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

### Staff

All Staff are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

All Staff, including full-time, part-time, casual, relief, teaching and non-teaching Staff, are required, as a condition of their employment at the College, to comply with our Child Protection and Safety Program, including the Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns and regarding WWCCs.

It is each individual’s responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise any and all child safety incidents or concerns with one of the College’s Child Safety Officers and with external agencies where required.

To meet these obligations, all Staff must:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the College
- always follow the College’s child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures in the Child Safety and Protection Program
- act in accordance with the Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct
- identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, and follow the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending
- ensure students views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

### Volunteers

A Volunteer is a someone who performs work for the College in a College environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider College or local community. Volunteers are not “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

All Volunteers at the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all Volunteers must comply with our Child Protection Policy and Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct
- Direct Contact Volunteers (and, if required by the College, other Volunteers such as Regular Volunteers who are engaged in “child-connected work”) must:
  - participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the College
  - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
  - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm
  - raise all child safety concerns with one of the College’s Child Safety Officers.

## Contractors

A Contractor is someone engaged by the College to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the College. However, Contractors who have direct contact with children are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Contractors may include maintenance and building personnel, consultants, music tutors, sports coaches, and cleaners as well as external education providers (organisations that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College).

All Contractors are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all Contractors must comply with our Child Protection Policy and Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct.
- Direct Contact Contractors (and, if required by the College, other Contractors such as Regular Contractors who are engaged in “child-connected work”) must:
  - participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the College
  - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
  - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm
  - raise all child safety concerns with one of the College’s Child Safety Officers.

The College may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

## External Educational Providers

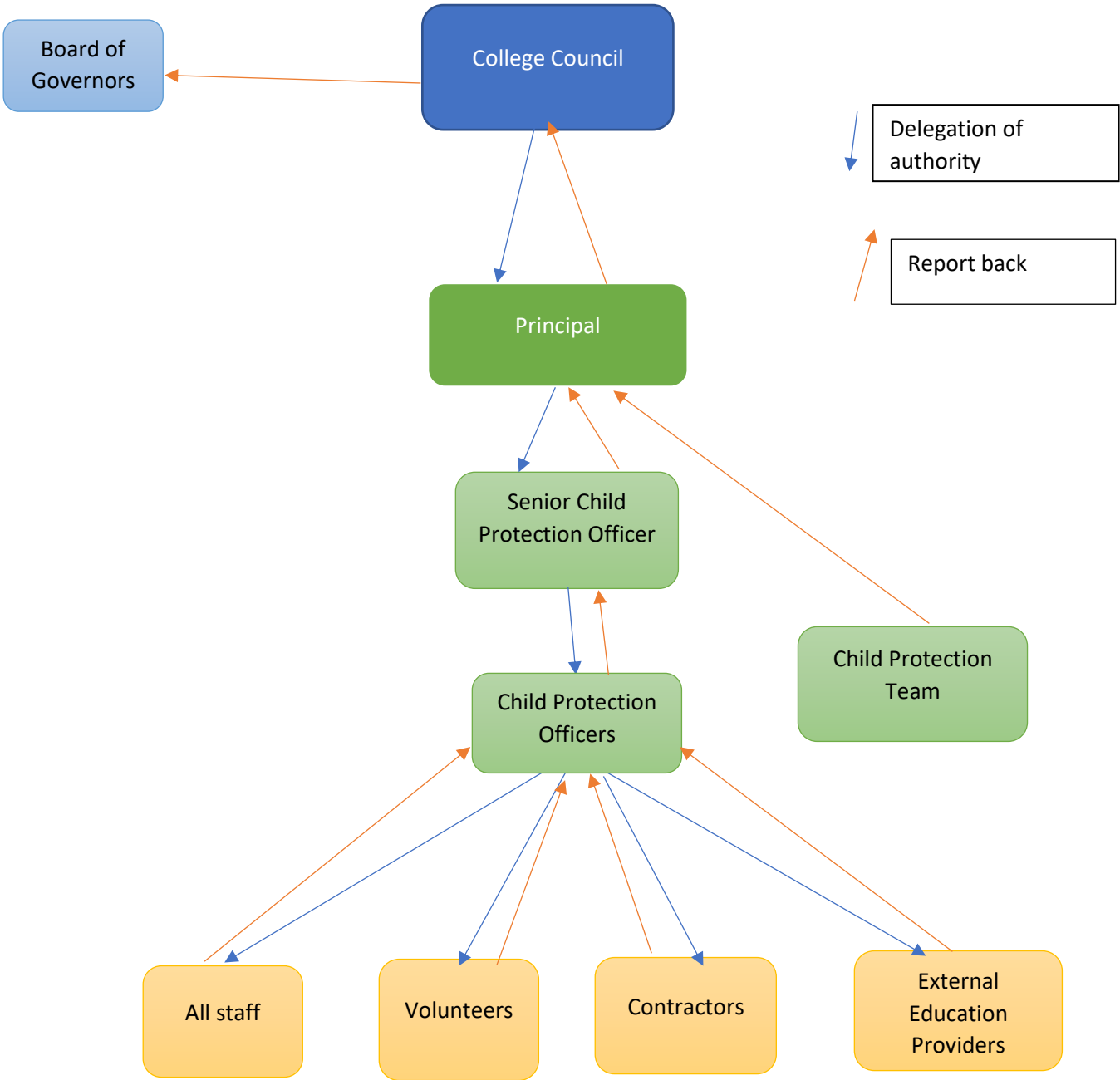
An External Education Provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College. The delivery may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment (this includes camps and excursions).

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Protection Policy, and adhere to our Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct.

Sholem Aleichem College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

# Child Protections delegation of authority and reporting



Note: All staff/volunteers/contractors/External Education Providers can report directly to Child Protection if they are made aware of any disclosures, reports, allegations of child abuse

## 2.7 Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

All children and young people who come to Sholem Aleichem College have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children

and young people are safe and feel safe and can actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The College regards its Child safety and protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the College community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

The College's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing has been designed to reflect the National Principles.

## **2.8 Child Safety and Protection Standards**

In addition to implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the College's commitment to child safety is based on the National Principles.

Requiring compliance with these additional Standards is one of the strategies employed by Sholem Aleichem College to embed a culture of child safety at the College.

Sholem Aleichem College has also developed specific child safe principles and values relevant to its own specific circumstances that guide our practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and harm.

### The Victorian Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Child Safe Standards were originally developed in response to the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations. They were replaced by a set of new Standards in 2022, to reflect the National Principles and to support greater national consistency. There are 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards. They are:

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.
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.

## **2.9 Sholem Aleichem College's Child Safety and Protection Principles and Values**

- All children have the right to be safe.

- The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
- The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
- Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Protection Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy.
- The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
- Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
- Procedures are in place to screen all staff, Direct Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with children.
- Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Child Safety and Protection training is mandatory for all School Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.
- Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Children and other children who are vulnerable (such as children in out-of-home care or children of diverse sexuality) have the right to special care and support.
- Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

## **2.10 The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**

### The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles were developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission in response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Principles are comprised of 10 Principles that were informed by, but go further than, the 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission. They are:

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



## 2.11 Children and Young People’s Rights to Safety, Information and Participation

Sholem Aleichem College is a child safe and child-centred organisation. Our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities and classroom learning. This may include peer mediation, student representative councils, leadership portfolios, planning and running of special events and sustainability.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our College and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

## 2.12 Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct

Our Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct include a Child Protection Code of Conduct and a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy. Together, these Codes of Conduct set

boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in our College community and students, including in physical, online and virtual environments.

We also have a Student Child Safety and Protection Code of Conduct, which includes standards of behaviour for students relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

Our Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct include clear processes to report inappropriate behaviour. We publish our Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at our College and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

### **2.13 Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the College**

The College recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure that they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort, and the local community in which our College operates) know about the College's operations and policies, including its Child Protection Policy and the Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct, privacy, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning.

We build cultural safety at the College through partnerships with relevant communities.

### **2.14 Valuing Diversity and Equity in the College Community**

Our College values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- support students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- support students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, religions, abilities and identities
- ensure that all teaching Staff have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring that our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

### **2.15 Embedding a Culture of Child Safety**

#### Cultural Safety

At Sholem Aleichem College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe College where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and their communities (including local Aboriginal communities relevant to the College) to have a voice and presence in our College's planning, policies, and activities.

Sholem Aleichem College's Child Protection and Safety Program is one of the strategies employed to embed a culture of child safety at the College.

Our Child Protection and Safety Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from abuse or other harm and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the College. It includes:

- Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct
- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of child abuse and other harm
- clear procedures, that are consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions ([https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf)), for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Child Safety Officer, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm
- strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Leadership Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors including child protection requirements in all position descriptions and advertisements
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, that are consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions ([https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf)), including Mandatory Reporting to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection), Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and Reporting Child Sexual Abuse to Police
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability
- Child safety and protection training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 and the National Principles)
- a system for continuous review and improvement through Executive Team meetings, Child Protection Subcommittee, Staff Meetings and Council Meetings.

## **2.16 Student Empowerment and Participation**

Sholem Aleichem College is a child safe and child-centred organisation, and we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our approach to child safety and wellbeing.



We ensure that our physical, virtual and online environments are friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our College and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We recognise the importance of friendships and encourage respectful relationships, strong friendships and support from peers.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote the participation of and empowerment of students, and to implement all of the above obligations, are set out in the Participation and Empowerment of Students section of our Child Safety and Protection Program.

### **2.17 Training on and Information About the Child Protection and Safety Program**

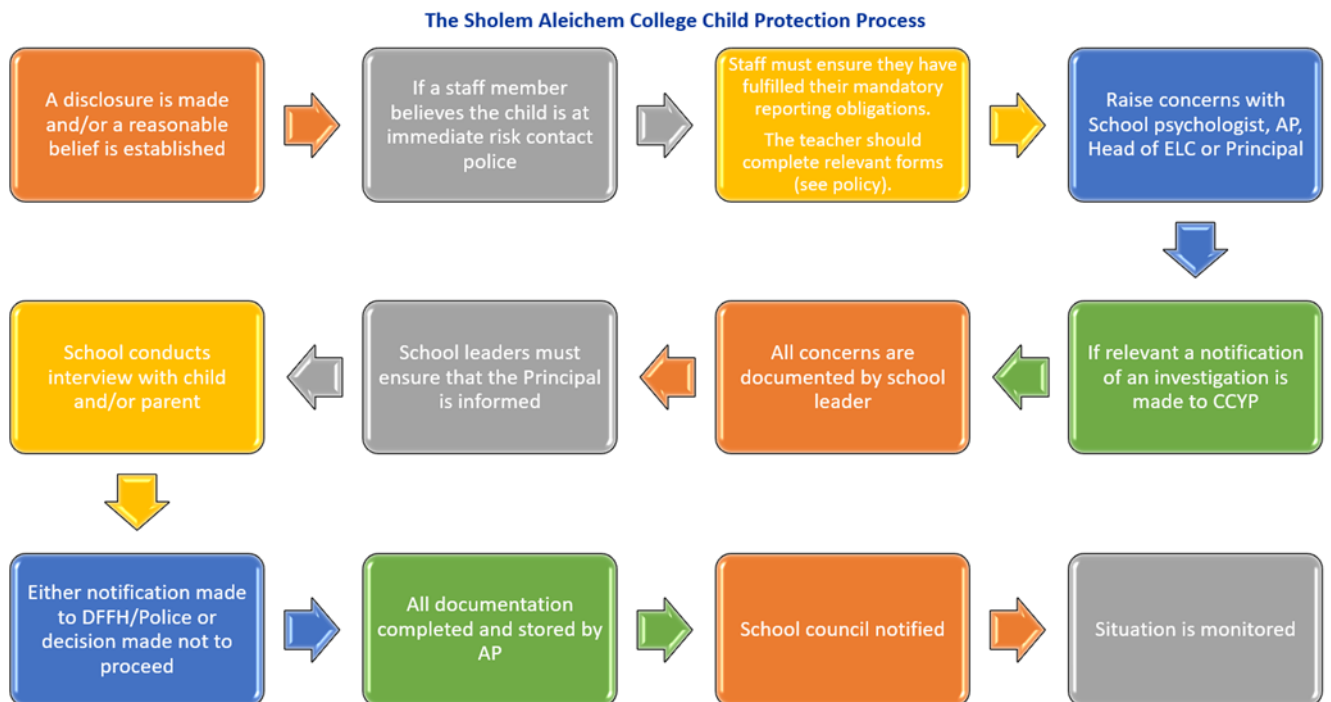
As a part of Sholem Aleichem College's induction process, all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors, are required to complete induction training on our Child safety and protection policies, practices and procedures.

All Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing Child safety and protection training annually.

The College provides all Visitors to the College, including Casual Volunteers and Contractors, with information about the Child Safe Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities.

The College provides Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors with support and regular supervision by their Head of Department, the College's Child Safety Officers and/or the Leadership Team to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child safety.

## 2.18 Complaints and Reporting Processes: The College's Response to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns



Sholem Aleichem College fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the College community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety and wellbeing. Our processes for raising complaints and concerns, and the procedures that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a Volunteer, a Contractor or the College, are set out in the Procedures, below.

The College will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, students, parents/carers or anyone else reports these to the College.

The College's response will include:

- externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to Child Protection (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse), the CCYP (Reportable Conduct), and/or the Victorian Institute of Teaching (Teacher Misconduct), depending on the issues raised and consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other vulnerable students (such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)
- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme

- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the College's response to it
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the College (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

### **2.19 Child Safety and Protection Human Resources Management (Recruitment and Screening)**

Sholem Aleichem College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. Our practices include:

- requiring all Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors to maintain a valid VIT Registration or WWCC (working with children check) clearance and sighting, verifying and recording information.
- ensuring that all Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors undergo Child safety and protection induction, and ongoing education and training
- ensuring that we provide Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors who engage with students, with regular supervision and performance monitoring by their Head of Department or a senior member of Staff
- ensuring that professional development programs for Staff include Child safety and protection education and training programs including briefings run by Senior Child Safety Officer and an e-module.

### **2.20 Child Safety and Protection Risk Management**

Sholem Aleichem College recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We identify, assess and manage Child safety and protection risks in all College environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, its physical, virtual and online environments and the characteristics of the student body. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We record identified risks to child safety and wellbeing in our Child Safety and Protection Risk Register, along with the actions in place at the College to manage these risks. College Council, the Principal and/or the Leadership Team monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions at least annually.

The College has adopted a proactive risk management approach to Child safety and protection by developing and implementing strategies to identify and mitigate our Child safety and protection risks based on:

- the nature of all College environments including physical and online environments
- the activities students undertake at the College (including the provision of services by contractors or outside the College's physical environment)
- the characteristics and needs of all our students.

#### Risk Management Strategies

Sholem Aleichem College has implemented the following risk mitigation strategies to ensure that the College maintains a proactive approach to our duty of care to protect children from harm and comply with our legal and regulatory obligations:

- this Child Protection and Safety Program, including our Child Protection Policy and our Child Protection Code of Conduct
- a comprehensive Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy, implemented through training and communicated publicly
- induction and ongoing training provided to the Council and staff, at least annually, about identifying risks of child abuse in the College environment, their obligations and responsibilities for managing these risks, how to report and respond to Child safety and protection incidents, and the College's current child safety standards
- the appointment of the College's Child Safety Officers at the College and receive specialised, additional training to ensure that any concerns about child safety and protection in the College environment held by students, staff, Volunteers and parents/carers may be discussed in a safe and supportive environment
- extensive policies and procedures relating to excursions and camps ensuring that Child safety and protection risks specific to excursions and overnight stays are identified and controls are put in place
- ongoing, periodic reviews of all physical College environments to eliminate physical isolation risks, such as solid classroom doors or rooms with no windows, or implement procedural controls where elimination is not possible
- procedures for verifying the WWCC clearance of all External Education Providers and Third-Party Contractors, who may have direct contact with students, to ensure that students remain safe in all College environments both internal and external to the College grounds
- clear procedures for reporting Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) to ensure all risks specific to staff and Volunteer conduct are identified and controls are put in place
- identifying and recording all risks of child abuse in all College environments in a Child safety and protection risk register, and assessing the risks regarding the likelihood of the risk event occurring and the potential consequences if it was to occur
- a system of assurance through which risks of child abuse, and actions taken to reduce or remove these risks (risk controls), are recorded. The system is also used to monitor risk controls and to evaluate their overall effectiveness on a regular basis.

## **2.21 Privacy and Information Sharing**

The College collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the College to disclose information about child safety and wellbeing to external people and agencies.

## **2.22 Child Safety and Protection Record Keeping**

The College is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns.

The College records all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the College using PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools.

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the College maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

Effective Child safety and protection record keeping is one of the College's key strategies in the management of its Child safety and protection obligations, including the fulfillment of our duty of care.

It is through such record keeping that the College can ensure that, should there ever be a need for evidence of the College's child safe culture or precautions and preventative measures taken in response to the risk of child abuse, the College has well-documented and easily-accessible records.

The child protection register will be maintained by the Senior Child Protection Officer.

### **2.23 Documenting a Suspicion or Belief of Abuse**

Where a staff member, Council member, Direct Contact Volunteer or other member of the College community forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a student needs protection, written and dated notes of their observations and concerns should be recorded to assist in a referral/report of child abuse.

All verbal and written communications regarding Child safety and protection matters (including notes of observations, student disclosures, meetings and telephone calls) must be properly documented. The documented records should include dates and times and enough detail to record key conversations, especially those relating to the student's disclosure.

The records of Child safety and protection must be stored securely.

### **2.24 How to Record Observations, Disclosures or Allegations of Abuse, Grooming or Student Sexual Offending**

The College requires all members of the College community, including the Council, staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers to use the The Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse, 2018 [https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf) to record all observations, beliefs, suspicions, disclosures or allegations of abuse, grooming or student sexual offending.

The form is made available on the College's Community App, College Online platform, and in hard copy at the College.

The "Process of Review" section in the form must be completed between 4-6 weeks after an incident, suspicion or disclosure of abuse in conjunction with the College's Principal, a Child Safety Officer or a senior member of staff.

All completed reporting forms are to be given to the College's Principal, a Child Safety Officer or a senior member of staff. The College maintains records of these forms indefinitely. Child Safety and Protection records are only disposed of subject to law or policy.

Records relating to a Child safety and protection incident are only disposed of in accordance with our Records Management Policy.

### **2.25 Working With Children Check or WWCC Documentation**

It is the responsibility of Human Resources department to verify the status of all College staff and non-parent volunteers' WWCC status.

In line with the College's risk-based approach to child safety and protection, where parent volunteers are volunteering at large off-site activities, such as overnight excursions or camps, the College requires that these parent volunteers hold a valid WWCC as a matter of necessity.

Sholem Aleichem College maintains records (electronic or hard copy format) of child-related workers including:

- full name
- WWCC Application Receipt Number (if applicable)
- WWCC Card Number
- date and outcome of WWCC clearance (if applicable)
- notices sent by the Department of Justice
- expiry date.

## **2.26 Records of Teacher Registration and VIT Notifications**

Sholem Aleichem College maintains a register of the registration status of all teachers at the College. That register includes a record of the date and type of any notifications made to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) by the College about a registered teacher.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the register of teachers is maintained up to date with relevant notifications.

The effective implementation of the College's risk management strategies in Child Safety and Protection Risk Management is an example of taking reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child.

The College maintains accurate and comprehensive records of these policies, procedures and strategies should the courts ever call on such evidence in relation to a claim against the College for damages in respect of child abuse.

## **2.27 Child Protection and Safety Program Review**

Sholem Aleichem College is committed to the continuous improvement of the policies and procedures making up our entire Child Protection and Safety Program. The Program as a whole is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, the College:

- actively seeks, actions, and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider College community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- analyses any complaints and child safety incidents that may have occurred
- communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the College community.

## **2.28 Child Safety and Protection Procedures**

### Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the College

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Any person, including all Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students, can at any time report concerns about the wellbeing of a child aged under 17 to Child Protection by:

- during business hours (8:45am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday), contacting the Child Protection intake service. South Division Intake - 1300 655 795

- after hours, telephoning 13 12 78.

### Staff

Our Child Protection and Safety Program provides detailed guidance for Council members, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally at the College. These reports can be made to a Child Safety Officer or the Principal.

Where the incident or concerns involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the Council President

Our Child Protection and Safety Program also contains detailed guidance for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors about when and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

We recognise that some individuals, particularly children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns. Our Inclusion department and College psychologist provide guidance on identifying additional vulnerabilities and barriers, and strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the College community and enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the College.

### Students, Parents/Carers and Community Members

The College provides students at the College with information about and encourages them to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College. We explain these in our Child Safety and Protection Complaints Management (7) policy, and they include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact:

- the College's Senior Child Safety Officer, Con Roubos, by phoning 85273000 or emailing [croubos@sholem.vic.edu.au](mailto:croubos@sholem.vic.edu.au) or the Principal; or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the Council President.

Any person can also contact the Senior Child Safety Officer if they have concerns regarding the College's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

### The College's Response to External Reporting of Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Our Child Protection and Safety Program sets out the procedures, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions

([https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf)), that the College will follow for any child safety incident or concern involving a student, College Staff, Volunteer, Contractor or Visitor, or other person connected to the College or the College environment.

It also provides guidance for all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on their obligations to respond to and report, to relevant external authorities, child safety incidents and concerns.

These procedures and guidance involving the school or its staff are summarised in Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns (4).

### Support for Students, Families and Staff Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure

Child safety incidents or concerns can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children, as well as on their families. In addition to reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, the College plays a central role in addressing this trauma and has a duty of care to ensure that students feel safe and supported at College.

The College employs a range of measures to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern, depending on the particular circumstances of the matter and of the student and their family:

- Child Safety Officers will work with the student and their family to develop a Student Support Plan
- support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include offering or organising referrals to internal or external support, such as the College Psychologist or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation which specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm.

The College offers former students who may disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the College similar support.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors involved. The College assists impacted Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to access necessary support.

### **2.29 Implementation and Communication**

The Child Protection Policy is published on our College's Community App, the College Online platform, College website and a hard copy is available from reception.

It is provided to new Staff, and to Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors at their induction or prior to them commencing their work at the College.

All Visitors to the College, including Casual Volunteers and Casual Contractors, are provided with information about the Child Protection Policy (including in particular the Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities) through our induction program.

### **2.30 Breach of the Child Protection Policy**

Sholem Aleichem College enforces this Child Protection Policy and our Child Safety and Protection Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension and investigation
- in the case of serious breaches, a report to the appropriate authorities e.g. Victoria Police, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

### **2.31 Source of Obligation**



The Child Protection Policy implements, and is to be read and understood in conjunction with:

- the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Ministerial Order 1359
- the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

### **2.32 Policy Review**

A review of this Child Protection Policy is conducted annually.

College Council is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy.

Date reviewed: December 2022

Endorsed by Council: January 2023

Date of next review: December 2023 or earlier if required