



child safe standards

NUMBER: 10074

TITLE:STANDARD 7 – EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN

LOCATION:STAFF

REVIEWER:HOSS

REVIEW FREQUENCY: Q1 - YEARLY

PURPOSE

Ballarat Grammar is committed to zero tolerance of child abuse. All staff and members of our community have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care.

As a school with a diverse population, this includes students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable, or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. Ballarat Grammar recognises that in order to achieve a child safe environment at the School which meets students' intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral needs, students need to be involved in the creation and maintenance of such an environment.

It is our policy that we have simple and accessible processes in place to assist children (including those from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with a disability) to develop appropriate knowledge and skills to identify and communicate when they do not feel safe.

PROCEDURE

This is done through various work systems, practices, policies and procedures. These include:

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the support given to students for their development as a person. It relates to the total care of students and involves tending to both the academic and non-academic needs of students including spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing. Ballarat Grammar's Pastoral Care Policy can be found on the School Portal. Ballarat Grammar is committed to providing a safe, supportive and social environment where students feel nurtured as they learn.



BALLARAT GRAMMAR

To this end, we have developed, and continue to develop, a comprehensive range of pastoral care policies and procedures that are designed to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of our students, and to deliver age appropriate education to all students about:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- child abuse awareness and a child's right to be safe;
- a child's right to make decisions about their body and their privacy;
- how they can raise concerns about abuse;
- resilience and coping with adversity;
- the fact that any concerns they do raise will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately;
- our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct; and standards of behaviour for students.

We are committed to ensuring that child abuse reporting procedures are age appropriate, simple, and accessible for all children including children from culturally diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

Information about these topics, as well as other child safety and wellbeing topics, is made available to all students through various age appropriate pastoral care initiatives. Child safety and wellbeing topics are also incorporated into the School's curriculum.

Education and its Implementation

Our education program aims to:

- Continually identify and document practices that are already in place in the School to promote the empowerment and participation of children and young people in our community.
- Assess these practices identifying strengths, gaps and areas that require further work.
- Deliver appropriate education about standards of behaviour for students attending the School as both day and boarding students and across all campuses; healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality); resilience; and child abuse awareness and prevention.

In addition, we aim to sustain our promotion of child safety in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children by:

- Ensuring that information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children at Ballarat Grammar, and are specifically adapted to the cultural and social contexts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.
- Raise awareness in the School community about the rights of children.
- Introduce a systematic, age-appropriate, child safety curriculum.
- Sustaining a Culture of Child Safety.
- Provide students in the School through Pastoral Care classes and the set Health curriculum with age-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and privacy, and how they can raise concerns.
- Regularly review the effectiveness of the School's child safety curriculum to enable students to feel safe, respected and empowered to contribute to the School's understanding of child safety and to report an allegation or concern for their own safety.
- Sharing information that is accessible to all students who attend our school, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.
- Regularly gather feedback from students and implement improvements based on this feedback.
- Provide training for relevant staff and volunteers on methods of empowering children and encouraging their participation.



Education Program Effectiveness

Embedded strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children are those that:

- Allow our students to feel safe, respected and empowered to contribute to the School's understanding of child safety and to report an allegation or concern for their own safety
- Help all children in the School to understand what child safety is, know their rights and how to easily access reporting procedures when they feel unsafe
- Assist all staff in the School to understand how to empower and encourage the participation of children in creating a child-safe school
- Enable teachers in the School to feel confident and prepared to deliver age-appropriate education about child-protection awareness including healthy and respectful relationships
- Consult children and young people about child-safety matters
- Ensure concerns reported by children in the School are responded to appropriately and promptly.

Students with a Disability

The School has an obligation to students with a disability to ensure that they are afforded the same level of educational and pastoral care as any other student at the School and considers how each policy and procedure the School establishes and implements may affect students with a disability.

Ballarat Grammar is committed to ensuring that we fulfil our legal obligations including those related to discrimination and disability standards. Where there is a concern about a student being able to communicate, specialist staff must be engaged to support the student.

The School recognises that students with a disability will not only require additional assistance to participate and engage in school activities in a safe and supportive manner, but also that there are specific child protection risks that arise in relation to students with a disability.

Cultural Diversity

Children from culturally diverse backgrounds are children who identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis. They include children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent that identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Ballarat Grammar values and respects the racial and cultural diversity of our students and is committed to ensuring that the backgrounds of all students are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued so that racial and cultural differences do not compromise a student's safety and wellbeing.

It is our aim that:

- we identify children from culturally diverse backgrounds when they are enrolled in the School;
- we employ appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of these children as required;
- we encourage participation and empowerment of these children in the development of these strategies;
- we consider these children when developing and implementing policies and procedures related to child protection at the School; and
- we educate our staff about these cultural differences and the strategies and procedures we have employed.