



## Student Voice and Empowerment

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### Rationale:

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. The College will provide processes of communication and specific curriculum to assist children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

In addition, the College needs to provide a platform in which students' feel empowered to voice their perception and contributions to schooling; either formally or informally. Student connection to the College through inclusivity is vital, where promoting cultural safety, participation and empowerment of **all children** is central to everything that we do.

### Aims:

All school staff and people working in a child connected capacity need to have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

All school staff need to embrace and facilitate a holistic approach to student voice; where active listening will lead to greater student connection and engagement at the College.

### Implementation:

#### **Child Safety**

The school will provide students with the following strategies to facilitate the empowerment of students-

- Provision of child-appropriate and accessible information through College curriculum about:
  - What child abuse is;
  - Student rights to make decisions about their body;
  - Privacy,
  - Forms of child abuse;
  - How they can raise concerns about abuse;
  - School wide positive behaviour support;
  - Safe Schools Hub for students;
  - Respectful relationships education;
  - Health education;
  - Sexuality education;
  - Mental Health;
  - Supporting Resilience;
  - Child wise personal safety education;
  - Standards of behaviour for students attending Kambrya College;
  - Healthy and Respectful relationships (including sexuality and diversity);
  - Resilience;
  - Mind Matters;

#### **Inclusiveness and Empowerment**

- Information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children, for example- by having policies and procedures that are able to be accessed and understood by children with a disability.

Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children. As required, the school will engage with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to review information and processes. Additionally, the Regional Koorie support officer can arrange appropriate support for a student.

- Provide culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.
- Empowering students to have a formal voice of what needs to occur at the College from their perspective, with an identified forum and scheduled timeframe (created by the Leadership Team) of when this will occur.
- Involvement of students within School Council, linked to Department of Education and Training (DET) inclusivity process and protocols.
- The provision of student leadership groups (SRC, School Captains, Sub-School Captains etc.), with a staff member who will assist to promote and advocate their role within the College in having their voice heard.
- Translate organisational information (including information about children’s rights, child safe policies, statements of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, as required or upon request.
- Gather strategic feedback from students (for example, through surveys, focus groups, Pastoral Care, subject classes) about curriculum (and its delivery), and suggested improvements for the school.
- Enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. (For example, student views could be gathered through Sub-School suggestion boxes, feedback sessions through Pastoral Care sessions or via direct communication with the Child Safety Officer.
- Ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops through classrooms.
- Provide relevant training to all staff of Kambrya College on methods of inclusiveness to encourage the participation of all children, in all activities, through-
  - Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
  - Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
  - Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;
  - Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children living in Out-of-Home Care;
- Ensure Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Raise awareness within the College about children’s RIGHTS through our Values.
- Provide a physical environment that is visually inclusive and welcoming for Aboriginal peoples and culture, such as by displaying symbols that indicate support and respect for Aboriginal peoples.
- Promoting a school environment where the past is acknowledged, and Aboriginal cultural diversity is respected, such as by including an Acknowledgement of Country at each meeting or event.

*Samples adapted from DHHS booklet- An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and published by Victorian Govt. 2015*

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

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