בס"ד

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.
67 Alexandra Street, East St. Kilda VIC 3183
+61-3-9525-9165
www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Outlines the College's commitment, culture and approach to providing child protection and safety.

Version 4.0 / September 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy **3**
- Purpose of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy 3
- Who is covered by our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy? 3
- Framework and adoption of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy 4
- Context and Legislation 4
- Responsibility to implement our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy 4

Our commitment to protect **6**
- Commitment to Child Safety 6
- Our commitment to children and young people 6
- Our commitment to parents and carers 7
- Our commitment to our personnel 8
- Support provided to our personnel 8
- Our commitment to ensuring a child safe organisation 9

Definitions of Child Abuse and Family Violence in Victoria **11**
- Child Abuse 11
- Physical Abuse 11
- Emotional Abuse 12
- Neglect 12
- Sexual Abuse 12
- Grooming 13
- Exposure to Family Violence 13
- Key terms 14

Equity and Diversity: Principle of Inclusion **15**

Privacy **15**

Periodic Policy Review **16**
- Review Schedule 16
- Version History 16

Appendix 1: Associated Policies, Procedures, Forms, Records and Documents **17**
- Policies and Procedures 17
- Child-Friendly Documents 17
- Templates of Forms, Records and Related Documents 18

Appendix 2: Victorian Child Safe Standards **19**

Appendix 3: Legislation and Guidance **20**

Appendix 4: Definitions used in this Policy **21**

Appendix 5: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect **26**

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Purpose of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand (the College) is an Orthodox Jewish not-for-profit organisation in St Kilda East, providing formal Jewish educational services to enrolled children and young adults above the age of 16 years. The College also provides a limited range of informal extracurricular activities for unenrolled students of (primary and high) school age.

The College aims to provide students with a positive and enriching educational environment that promotes their religious, academic, social, physical and emotional development, based on Jewish heritage, commitment to Jewish Law (Halacha) and guided by religious values (Hashkafa).

The College has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. The College understands we have a legal and ethical obligation to keep children and young people safe from harm, and we take seriously our responsibility to deliver a learning environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. This policy, in conjunction with our other related policies (see **Appendix 1**), addresses the Victorian Child Safe Standards, currently regulated by the **Social Services Regulator** (see **Appendix 2**).

Who is covered by our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy?

This policy applies to all Personnel. Personnel refers to employees, staff, volunteers, committee members and contractors, regardless of their involvement in child related duties.

Personnel also refers to students when they are engaged in the College's outreach or volunteer work with children and young people. This definition distinguishes between adult-children interactions that arise from the enrolled student's volunteer or outreach work for the College, as opposed to the enrolled student's personal interactions with fellow enrolled students under the age of 18. To illustrate:

> *An 18-year-old enrolled student who provides transportation to a child or young person:*
> - *If the 18-year-old enrolled student's relationship with the child or young person arises through the student's volunteer or outreach work for the College, such transportation is subject to the College's child safe policies and procedures.*
> - *If the 18-year-old enrolled student's relationship with the child or young person is as a fellow enrolled student, such transportation is not subject to the College's child safe policies and procedures.*

All College Personnel must agree to abide by this policy. Certain persons are mandatory reporters under Victorian law, including specified professional groups and people in religious ministry. Independently of whether a person is a statutory mandatory reporter, all personnel at The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand have an organisational responsibility to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation.
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring both within and outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service.
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs and services.

All personnel are obligated to report any concern for the well-being of a child, including the following:

- disclosure by a child or family member or observations of the indicators abuse or harm.
- allegation, suspicion or observation of inappropriate behaviour by a volunteer or staff.
- breach of policy caused by process failure.
- accidental harm or other child-safety concern.

Framework and adoption of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The **Executive Committee** is the governing body of the College. Members of our Executive Committee are listed on our website at this link: https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/management.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy has been formally approved and endorsed by our Executive Committee, who undertake a culture and practice of leadership and ultimate responsibility in promoting child safety within the organisation. This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is our college's statement of commitment to a set of principles and procedural benchmarks that underpin our policies and procedures in relation to the protection of children and young people.

Wherever the Executive Committee is referenced in this document, the Executive Committee has delegated operational authority and responsibility to the College's Executive Director. Successful implementation requires ongoing and constant management and championing. The Executive Director will be supported in this role by the College's Child Safety Officer. This is a formal and paid position, which demonstrates the investment and commitment of the Executive Committee, as well as heightening the commitment of the Child Safety Officer. The Executive Director and Child Safety Officer are identified on our website at this link: https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/faculty.

Context and Legislation

This document, its policies and procedures, have been developed in line with Victorian legislation, including the **Victorian Child Safe Standards** (VCSS – see **Appendix 2**). The VCSS provide a framework for ensuring organisations are able to detect and respond to child safety concerns and more effectively prevent risk from occurring.

It is a requirement of The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand, and participating Member organisations who sign up to follow The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, to become and remain compliant, at all times with, the VCSS. The standards, when implemented in their totality, support The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand and participating Member organisations to develop and maintain an effective child safe culture across all of its activities, programs and services.

The Policy is also informed by and consistent with a range of other legislation and guidance, a list of which is set out in **Appendix 3**. As a registered training organisation, where the College offers training or assessment to students under 18, it will identify and manage risks to their safety and wellbeing having regard to the training content and modes of delivery and in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, as required by the current Standards for Registered Training Organisations.

Responsibility to implement our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The Executive Committee is responsible for the development, endorsement, and oversight of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. It delegates the implementation of the policy to the College's Executive Director, who is supported by the Child Safety Officer, and who works in conjunction with the **Rosh Yeshivah** (Dean) and **Mashgiach** (head of Behaviour and Welfare) to execute the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The role of each entity in relation to the development and compliance of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is detailed in the following table.

Role	Responsibility
College Executive Committee as delegated to the Executive Director and supported by the Child Safety Officer	• Promote and communicate The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand's commitment to this policy and the importance of meeting standards and statutory requirements. • Provide leadership, oversight and application of all elements of this policy ensuring structures, systems and training are in place to be effective. • Demonstrate leadership in child safe practice. • Continuously develop a culture of child safety within the organisation. • Support ongoing monitoring and a formal review of this policy at least every three years, or earlier where legislation, regulation, incidents, complaints, risk reviews or organisational learning require change. • Ensure a report of any child protection reports, incidents and near misses is reviewed on a quarterly basis. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for development and effective implementation of this policy.
Executive Director, supported by the Child Safety Officer, in conjunction with the *Rosh Yeshivah* (Dean) and *Mashgiach* (head of Behaviour and Welfare)	• Ensure employees, committee members, volunteers, contractors, students engaged in outreach or volunteer work with children or young people, are familiar with the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and supporting documents. • Provide support to employees, volunteers, contractors, students engaged in the College's outreach or volunteer work with children or young people, to ensure children are safe. • Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/work procedures and guidelines are in place to support child protection practice. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection. • Ensure that the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is visible and accessible to all stakeholders including parents/carers and children and young people. • Receive reports of child safety concerns or allegations of abuse and support staff to follow correct procedures. • Offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused employee, volunteer, committee member, contractor, or student. • Develop and distribute child safe materials and resources such as posters and leaflets within the organisation, but also externally. • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy. • Research and disseminate information and updates regarding Child Safe Standards and legislative changes to all employees, volunteers, committee members, contractors, students engaged in the College's outreach or volunteer work with children or young people. • Have a management representative to ensure processes are established, implemented and maintained, reporting to management on performance and promoting awareness throughout the organisation. • Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required). • Ensure child safe standards are included in risk assessments. • Ensure organisational systems and processes are in place relating to people recruitment, training, appraisals and ongoing management. • Apply all relevant recruitment and pre-employment screening processes to select appropriate participants to work and volunteer with children. • Provide information relating to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and related policies via training and induction material.
All	• To be aware of, understand and apply the requirements of this policy and related policies in all areas of the College's work. • Report any abuse/neglect concerns, allegations or disclosures to the Child Safety Officer or Executive Director and/or appropriate authorities. • Where a child is in immediate danger call 000.

Our commitment to protect

The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand endorses and supports the principles of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989** (ratified in Australia in 1990). The Convention recognises that children under the age of 18 years need special care and protection.

In recognition of our support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we make the following commitments to the children, young people and families who access our activities, programs, services and facilities.

Commitment to Child Safety

Rabbinical College has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse, child harm or risk of harm, and neglect. As an organisation, we recognise that all children and young people have a right to be kept safe from harm and we are committed to upholding this moral and legal obligation at all times. Consistent with this commitment, Rabbinical College works with all personnel to ensure child safety is at the forefront of practice at all times.

Our commitment to children and young people

Adults are ultimately responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. However, informed and empowered children and young people are more able and likely to contribute to the prevention of abuse.

- We expect our personnel to understand children's rights. An understanding of children's rights is an important basis for all the programs and services that we offer to children and families. It enables us to identify when children's needs and entitlements are compromised and when they require support. We expect our personnel to have a working knowledge of children's rights appropriate to their role and use it to inform decisions about how to behave and act with and on behalf of children and young people.
- We expect our personnel to take account and be respectful of the diversity of all children and young people, including (but not limited to) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability, children who are at risk of harm, children who are unable to live at home, and LGBTI children and young people.
- We are committed to the participation and empowerment of all children and young people.
- We expect our personnel to empower the culturally safe participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- We have a zero-tolerance attitude toward racism and other forms of discrimination, and will take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified .
- We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people who access any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.
- We are committed to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We expect our personnel to understand and acknowledge the significance of family relationships for children and young people.

- We will support families and communities to promote children and young people's healthy development and well-being.
- We will take action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse, family violence and neglect.
- In our activities, programs, services and facilities, we will take all reasonable measures to prevent children from being exploited, abused, or harmed.
- We require our staff to promote and distribute information about this policy to children, young people and parents/carers as part of the enrolment pack when they first contact us for any of our services.
- The information will be made available in developmentally appropriate language and in language to accommodate the main communities that access our services (i.e. English speaking students / families from a Jewish religious / cultural background).
- We value the voices of children and young people and ensure that children are able to contribute and consent to decisions that may impact them. Children can actively participate in decision making and give feedback with no fear of repercussions. We will facilitate opportunities for children and young people to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat children as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities. We expect our personnel to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that will respect and support children and young people.

The College seeks the views of children and young people in the following ways:

- Consulting with children and young people about what child safety means to them.
- Giving children and young people information about the standards of care they are entitled to.
- Giving children information about their rights.
- Providing accessible versions of the child safe policy.

Our commitment to parents and carers

- We understand children's experiences of their family are foundational for their development, and families can act as supportive resources for growth and resilience in children. Unfortunately, in some instances, family relationships can also restrain and harm children's social, physical, cognitive and emotional functioning. Families are the single most significant influence in shaping the way children develop and perceive their sense of identity. We expect our personnel to recognise, respect and work to strengthen the capacities of parents/carers and other family members to care and protect their children.
- We are committed to supporting parents and carers to protect their children.
- We will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths, is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their children.
- We are committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We aim to have a clear and easily understood complaints and feedback process in place for children and their parents/carers.
- We aim to be transparent in our decision-making with parents and carers while not compromising the safety of children or young people.
- We will seek to involve parents/carers whenever possible and practicable in the decision-making process that impacts on them and their children.

- We will offer opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling families of children who have experienced abuse and any other family in the community who may indirectly be affected by an incident.
- We will involve parents/carers and children when developing and reviewing organisational policies

Our commitment to our personnel

In order to fulfil our obligations to the protection of children and young people, The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand makes the following commitments to its personnel.

- We are committed to providing our personnel with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles.
- We will put in place a management structure that supports and develops personnel in their roles.
- We will provide ongoing education of personnel in child abuse awareness, child abuse prevention and safe practices.
- We are committed to providing our personnel with regular supervision and development.
- We will ensure that our personnel have access to a suitable person with whom to consult, should they wish, in relation to any action required to protect children and young people from abuse, bullying and exploitation.
- We will offer opportunities for debriefing and/or counselling of staff who may have been impacted or affected by an incident.
- We will work to ensure that there are safeguards in place to protect personnel from violence or any kind of harassment in their workplace.

Support provided to our personnel

The College is committed to fostering an organisational culture where all personnel and their families feel able to raise child protection concerns. As part of this, the College will ensure that personnel receive training and support to undertake their duties in accordance with this policy. This includes training in relation to identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect at least every two years.

In addition, we will ensure that our personnel receive appropriate child-safety education and training. Personnel will receive training on induction and refresher training at least every two years, with additional role-appropriate training or information when material legislative, regulatory, policy or risk changes occur, or where incidents, supervision or other information identify a need. Training will include:

- The College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- The College's **Child Safe Code of Conduct**.
- The College's **Child Safe Reporting Procedure**.
- Making a disclosure
- Mandatory Reporting
- Processes and Procedures for responding to allegations of abuse
- Sensitivity to the diversity characteristics of the College community
- This policy, the College's **Child Safe Code of Conduct** and the College's **Child Safe Reporting Procedure** will form part of the induction of our personnel

We will ensure that our personnel understand what is expected of them in relation to children's welfare and safety. Personnel will be provided with appropriate opportunities to clarify child-safety procedures and will be informed of relevant changes or issues through meetings, training or other suitable communications. Findings and resulting actions from relevant child-safety reviews will be communicated in a timely and appropriate manner to personnel, students, families and the College community, having regard to relevance, privacy and confidentiality.

We will ensure that our personnel are aware of the formal recruitment, screening and employment practices of The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand in relation to individuals with specific roles in working or volunteering with children and families. All personnel will be informed during recruitment of the screening requirements applicable to their role, including a Working with Children Check where required by law or College policy and the College's National Criminal Records Check requirements.

This policy prohibits employment or volunteering with children or young people who access our services if the individual has convictions that make him or her ineligible for a Working with Children Check (or equivalent).

An individual is also in breach of this policy if he/she continues working or volunteering with us after being convicted or charged with a crime that would prevent them from receiving a Working with Children Check (or equivalent).

We will provide our personnel with guidance and supervision in relation to their role with children, young people and families. We recognise that caring for and working with children, young people and their families can be complex and challenging. As such, we will provide regular supervision for all our personnel in relation to their specific roles with children, young people and families.

We will provide opportunities for our personnel to receive debriefing in the event that it is required. We recognise that responding to children and young people who are at risk of or have experienced abuse, neglect and family violence can be stressful. It is even more complex when the perpetrator of the abuse or exploitation is another member of personnel, volunteer or community member. In these situations, we will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling to our personnel as required.

Our commitment to ensuring a child safe organisation

- We are committed to using best practice standards in the recruitment, screening and employment of personnel.
- We will strive to make a safe environment for children and young people.
- Our personnel will protect children and young people who are involved with our programs, services, or facilities from harm, abuse, and exploitation.
- In response to concerns raised by children, young people, or their parents, our personnel will take action.
- We will investigate all complaints or allegations made against any of our personnel.
- We will ensure that we report any crimes against children, young people or other family members to the Police in accordance with our policies, operational procedures and mandatory notification obligations.
- We expect our personnel to follow our complaints procedure without hesitation in response to concerns raised by children, young people and/or their parents/carers.

- We expect our personnel to understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse, bullying and exploitation. Please refer to **Appendix 5** for indicators.
- We expect our personnel to use the College's policies and operational procedures (as outlined in **Appendix 1**) whenever they have a concern that a child may be experiencing abuse, family violence or neglect.
- We expect that our personnel will support children, young people and their families, as directed by administration of the College, in the event that a child or young person is abused, bullied or exploited by any of our personnel.

For more detailed information regarding child safe recruitment, screening and support to staff, please refer to our **Human Resources Policy**.

Definitions of Child Abuse and Family Violence in Victoria

Child Abuse

Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC) as including:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or a grooming offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (VIC);
- the infliction of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- the serious neglect of a child.

Indicators of child abuse and harm can be found in **Appendix 5** of this policy.

A child is defined by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC) as a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Relevant parties must understand the definitions of child abuse and be able to act on this knowledge and report to the relevant authority where required.

Child abuse describes an act or omission which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. This can be a single event or a series of traumatic events. Most instances of child abuse fall under the definition of cumulative harm (repeated acts of harm) and multidimensional harm (multiple types of child abuse). Child abuse can be perpetrated by parents, caregivers, other adults, and/or other children and young people. Where sexual abuse is perpetrated by children or young people, it is usually referred to as, 'sexually harmful behaviour'. Child abuse, including child harm and neglect, are commonly divided into the following sub-categories:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- neglect;
- sexual abuse;
- grooming; and
- exposure to family violence.

Policy definitions can be found at **Appendix 4**.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can consist of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. Examples of physical abuse may include beating, shaking, burning, assault with implements and female genital mutilation.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs for life to the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, placed at risk, including:

- Food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Medical attention
- Supervision or care

The law differentiates between three different levels of neglect:

- 'Minor' neglect is low-level neglect that is trivial or temporary
- 'Significant' neglect is medium-level neglect that causes harm to a child that is more than trivial or temporary
- 'Serious' neglect involves the continued failure to provide a child with the 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.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse/harm occurs when a person uses power, force, or authority to involve a child in any form of sexual activity. Behaviour sex offenders engage in may include:

- touching or fondling children
- sending obscene or suggestive phone calls/texts to children
- exhibitionism and or voyeurism in front of children
- exposing children to pornographic images
- penetration with penis, finger or other object into the mouth, anus, or vagina.

Child sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact and can also include non-contact offences, for example:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- sending sexual messages or emails to a child
- exposing a sexual body part to a child
- forcing a child to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to a child)
- having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation).

Child sexual abuse does not always involve force. In some circumstances a child may be manipulated into believing that they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love, through a process of grooming.

Sexually harmful behaviour in children refers to harmful behaviour perpetrated by a child (17 years of age or younger) to another child. Harmful behaviours in children are often an indicator that they have experienced abuse or neglect. Where sexually harmful behaviour occurs, organisations have a duty of care to both children. Note that in children under 10 years of age, such behaviour is often referred to as sexually problematic behaviour.

Grooming

Grooming is predatory behaviour designed to prepare a child for sexual abuse. Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposefully create relationships with children and young people, their families and carers in order to establish the conditions necessary for them to abuse the child. For example:

- giving gifts or special attention to a child or their parent or carer (this can make a child feel special or indebted to an adult)
- controlling a child through threats, manipulation, force or use of authority (this can make a child scared to report unwanted behaviour)
- making close physical contact, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling
- openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material and sexual acts (this in itself is classified as child sexual abuse but can also be a precursor to physical sexual assault).

Grooming includes online grooming. It occurs when an adult uses electronic communication (including social media) in a predatory fashion to try to lower a child's inhibitions, or heighten their curiosity regarding sex, with the aim of eventually meeting them in person for the purposes of sexual activity.

It is important to note that when instances of grooming occur, other members of the child's community are also 'groomed'. This allows perpetrators to establish trust and a connection with the child via their support networks, further enhancing the conditions for other forms of child abuse to occur.

Exposure to Family Violence

The Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) defines family violence as behaviour by a person towards a family member where the behaviour:

- is physically, sexually, emotionally, economically or psychologically abusive
- is threatening or coercive; or
- in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person.

A child can be a direct victim to any of these behaviours. Family violence also includes behaviour that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, any of these behaviours.

Key terms

Multidimensional harm: Multi-dimensional harm occurs when more than one harm type is experienced at the same time e.g. sexual abuse also involving physical harm and emotional harm at the same time.

Cumulative harm: Cumulative harm refers to the effects of multiple adverse or harmful circumstances and events in a child's life. Cumulative harm may be caused by an accumulation of a single recurring adverse circumstance (such as unrelenting low-level care); or by multiple circumstances or events (such as persistent verbal harm and denigration, inconsistent or harsh disciplines and /or exposure to family violence).

Equity and Diversity: Principle of Inclusion

The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand is committed to the Principle of Inclusion. To achieve this outcome:

- We expect our personnel to take account of the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability, children who are at risk of harm, children who are unable to live at home, and LGBTIQ children and young people.
- We expect our personnel to make reasonable efforts to accommodate the matters referred to in the Principle of Inclusion.
- We expect our personnel to respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access our services. We recognise the importance of culture and religion in the lives of children, young people and families. We expect our personnel to act in ways that are inclusive and respectful of the cultural and religious practices of families who access our services. However, no cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of children to protection from harm.
- We expect our personnel to understand and respond accordingly to the needs of children and young people with developmental delays or disabilities. Personnel should communicate effectively with and support children with developmental disabilities and delays. As well, we commit to being proactive in recognizing children and young adults with developmental delays or disabilities are more susceptible to exploitation and harm.
- We have a zero-tolerance attitude toward racism and other forms of discrimination, and will take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified .

Privacy

We have a comprehensive **Privacy Policy**. We expect our Personnel to protect the privacy of children, young people and families. At the beginning of their involvement with our services, we will provide children, young people and their parents/carers with information that details this policy and its implications. The information will be made available in developmentally appropriate language and in language to accommodate the main communities that access our services (i.e. English speaking students / families from a Jewish religious/cultural background).

Periodic Policy Review

Review Schedule

The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand will conduct ongoing monitoring and will formally review this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every 3 years, in consultation with stakeholders. Ongoing monitoring will take account of incidents, near misses, complaints, Reportable Conduct matters, Working with Children Check controls, training, the child-safety risk register, feedback from children and families, legislative and regulatory changes and outstanding improvement actions. Some circumstances may trigger an earlier policy review, such as (but not limited to):

- after any serious incident; or,
- legislative changes; or,
- organisational changes; or,
- as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director and/or the Executive Committee.

Endorsement and review dates of the current version appear in the footer of this document. Endorsement and review dates of previous versions appear in the table below.

This policy has been reviewed and endorsed by:

Ari Schachter

Ari Schachter
Menahel Gashmi

Date: 18/09/2026

Josh Goldhirsch

Josh Goldhirsch
On behalf of the Executive Committee

Date: 18/09/2026

Version History

Version Number	Version Name	Endorsed by	Endorsement Date
1	Child Protection Policy	Interim CEO	December 2016
2	Child Protection Policy	Executive Director Executive Committee	15 December 2020
3	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Executive Director Executive Committee	26 February 2023
4	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Menahel Gashmi Executive Committee	September 2026

Appendix 1: Associated Policies, Procedures, Forms, Records and Documents

This Appendix contains other policies and procedures that relate to, and should be read in conjunction with, this document. These documents are all accessible on the College's website, at: https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/childsafety. They may include, but are not limited to:

Policies and Procedures

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/childsafetypolicy
Outlines the College's commitment, culture and approach to providing child protection and safety.

Child Safe Code of Conduct
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/codeofconduct
Outlines the College's clear expectations for appropriate behaviours with children and young people.

Child Safe Reporting Procedure
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/childreportingprocedure
Outlines the College's processes for responding to and reporting suspected abuse.

Human Resources Policy
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/humanresourcespolicy
Outlines the College's practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

Risk Management for Child Safety Policy
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/riskmanagementpolicy
Outlines the College's strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.

Child Safety Grievance Policy and Procedure
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/grievancepolicy
Outlines the College's framework for receiving, managing and addressing child safety grievances.

Child-Friendly Documents

Commitment to Children
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/commitment_children
Communicates the College's commitment to safeguarding children and young people in simple language.

Child-friendly and Parent-friendly Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/child_friendly_policy
Communicates all the College's Child Safety Policies and related documentation in a child-friendly and parent-friendly manner, and includes a reporting flowchart and child-friendly complaints guide.

Templates of Forms, Records and Related Documents

Flowchart: Child safety reporting process
http://rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/flowchart_reporting
Provides personnel and students with an easy-to-understand infographic of the reporting process.

Flowchart: Responding to disclosures / incidents process
http://rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/flowchart_responding
Provides personnel with an easy-to-understand infographic of managing incidents and disclosures.

A Step by Step Guide to making a Report to Child Protection or Orange Door
http://rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/stepbystepreporting
Provides personnel with an easy-to-access and clear guide to alerting Child Protection or Orange Door.

Risk Assessment and Action Plan Template
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/riskassessment
The College's template for assessing and managing child safety risks with an action plan.

Working With Children Check Register Template
https://www.rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/wwcc_register
The College's template for tracking the status of Personnel WWCC's.

HR Personnel Records Checklist
http://rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/hrchecklist
The College's checklist for ensuring all Personnel records are up-to-date.

HR Recruitment and Induction Checklist
http://rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/hrrecruitlist
The College's template for managing the recruitment and induction process.

HR Applicant Interview & Referee Record
http://rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/hrapplicant
The College's template for managing recruitment and referees interviews.

HR Personal Details and Identity Record
http://rabbinicalcollege.edu.au/hridentity
The College's checklist for authenticating personnel identity.

Appendix 2: Victorian Child Safe Standards



More details about the Victorian Child Safe Standards, currently regulated by the **Social Services Regulator**, can be accessed at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards**

Appendix 3: Legislation and Guidance

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005) – establishes the Victorian Children's Council and principles for the wellbeing of children in Victoria.

Children, Youth and Families Act (CYFA), 2005 – governs and guides the process of child protection in Victoria. Under this Act a person can make a report to Child Protection Services if they have: A significant concern for a child's wellbeing; belief the child is in need of protection; significant concern before the birth of a child about his/her wellbeing after his/her birth.

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), s 49M – creates the offence of grooming for sexual conduct with a child under 16. An adult commits the offence if they communicate by words or conduct with a child under 16, or with a person who has care, supervision or authority of the child, intending to facilitate sexual conduct involving the child.

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), s 49O – creates the failure-to-protect offence. It applies where a person in authority in an organisation knows of a substantial risk that a child under 16 in the organisation's care, supervision or authority will be sexually abused by an associated adult, and negligently fails to reduce or remove that risk.

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), s 327 – creates the failure-to-disclose offence. An adult who forms a reasonable belief that another adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 must report that information to Victoria Police, unless an exemption or reasonable excuse applies.

Reportable Conduct Scheme – Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme provides independent oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by workers and volunteers. The scheme commenced in 2017 and, from 23 February 2026, is regulated by the Social Services Regulator. The regulator can receive notifications, oversee and monitor investigations, share relevant information with screening and professional bodies, examine organisational child-safety systems and take other action provided by law.

Mandatory Reporting, ss 182(1), 184 and 162(1)(c)-(d) of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) – Certain prescribed professionals and people in religious ministry are mandatory reporters and must report to DFFH Child Protection where the statutory mandatory-reporting threshold is met. See the Child Safe Reporting Procedure for the reporter categories, applicable threshold and reporting process.

Worker Screening Act 2020 – Outlines the Working with Children Check framework, child-related work, relevant offences and findings, and obligations of individuals and organisations. The College also follows current Social Services Regulator requirements and guidance concerning Working with Children Check clearances, including current status and any interim or exclusionary action.

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 – requires an RTO offering training or assessment to students under 18 to identify and manage risks to their safety and wellbeing, having regard to training content and delivery mode and in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 – A new statutory duty of care has been created under the Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 to ensure that there is a clear legal duty placed on organisations to take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of child abuse (sexual and/or physical abuse) perpetrated by organisational representatives.

Appendix 4: Definitions used in this Policy

Term	Definition
Aboriginal Child	A person under the age of 18 who: ● Is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent ● Identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and ● Is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community
Adult	A person 18 years of age or older and includes persons who are employees, volunteers and associates of the College.
Bullying	Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include: ● Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats) ● Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting) ● Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating) ● Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	A person under the age of eighteen years
Child Abuse	An act committed against a child involving: physical abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, neglect, exposure to family violence, sexual abuse, grooming
Child related work	Work within one or more occupational fields prescribed under the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) that usually involves direct contact with a child as part of the person's duties, whether or not that contact is supervised, and is not merely occasional or incidental. Different statutory rules may apply to particular categories, including ministers of religion.
Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	A child or young person who identifies 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
Child safe organisation	In the context of child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse

Child Safety	In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse
Children with a disability	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden
College	The Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand
Contractor	A person or organisation that undertakes a contract to provide materials, tasks or labour to do a service or job.
Culturally and/or linguistically diverse background (CaLD)	Identification with particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of parents' identification on a similar basis
Cumulative Harm	Cumulative harm refers to the effects of multiple adverse or harmful circumstances and events in a child's life. Cumulative harm may be caused by an accumulation of a single recurring adverse circumstance (such as unrelenting low-level care); or by multiple circumstances or events (such as persistent verbal abuse and denigration, inconsistent or harsh disciplines and/or exposure to family violence.)
Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH)	The statutory authority responsible for receiving and investigating reports of child abuse
Direct Contact	A direct contact role is one that has contact with children and young people that is not incidental, but normally part of providing a service, program or activity for children and young people. This direct delivery may require regular physical contact and forms of ongoing communication.
Disclosure	Refers to a child telling someone (through words, drawings or actions) that he or she feels unsafe or has been harmed.
Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse occurs when a child's parent, caregiver or any other adult repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve: ● Being repeatedly rejected, name called or being put down. ● Being frightened by threats. ● Continual coldness to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development. ● Can involve repeated exposure to family violence

Exposure to Family Violence	Family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member that is: ● Physically or sexually abusive ● Emotionally (psychologically) abusive ● Coercive or in any way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of another family member. ● Behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to above. Exposure to family violence includes children seeing, hearing or experiencing the violence in a number of ways.
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to sexually abusing them . Grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by SMS. Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposely create relationships with children and young people, their families and carers in order to create a situation where abuse could occur. For example: ● Spending special time with a child e.g. in private settings, away from the organisation, online ● Isolating the children or young person from family and peers ● Giving gifts to a child ● Showing favouritism ● Allowing the child to step out of boundaries or rules ● Touching the child ● Testing and breaking professional boundaries
Harm	Harm, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by ● physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or ● sexual abuse or exploitation. ● a single act, omission or circumstance; or ● a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Multi-Dimensional Harm	Occurs when more than one abuse type is experienced at the same time e.g. sexual abuse also involving physical abuse and emotional abuse at the same time.

Mandatory Reporter	Certain persons in prescribed occupations or roles are mandatory reporters under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic). They must report to DFFH Child Protection if, in the course of their duties, they form a reasonable belief that a child needs protection from physical or sexual abuse. Separate legal duties may require reporting to Victoria Police. See the Child Safe Reporting Procedure for the applicable reporting pathways. Mandatory reporters include registered medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, teachers and early childhood teachers, school principals and counsellors, police officers, out-of-home care workers, early childhood workers, youth justice workers, registered psychologists and people in religious ministry.
Neglect	Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs for life: ● Food ● Clothing ● Shelter ● Medical attention ● Supervision or care To the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, placed at risk.
Parent	All those who have parent equivalent responsibilities for a child or young person including guardians, grandparents or other relatives, foster parents or other authorised carers
Personnel	All staff, volunteers, committee members and contractors, regardless of their involvement in child related duties, who are associated with the College. Personnel Includes all of those whom we employ directly, those we employ indirectly through other groups or organisations, and all those who are involved as volunteers. Personnel also refers to students when they are engaged in the College's outreach or volunteer work with children and young people. This definition distinguishes between adult-children interactions that arise from the enrolled student's volunteer or outreach work for the College, as opposed to the enrolled student's personal interactions with fellow enrolled students under the age of 18. To illustrate with an example: *An 18-year-old enrolled student who provides transportation to a child or young person:* ● *If the 18-year-old enrolled student's relationship with the child or young person arises through the student's volunteer or outreach work for the College, such transportation is subject to the College's child safe policies and procedures.* ● *If the 18-year-old enrolled student's relationship with the child or young person is as a fellow enrolled student, such transportation is not subject to the College's child safe policies and procedures.*
Physical Abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver or any other adult. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically

	aggressive treatment of a child. This may take the form of punching, beating, shaking or otherwise harming a child.
Practice and Behaviour Guidelines	Our **Practice and Behaviour Guidelines** assist in identifying and preventing behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people. They describe what is and is not, acceptable behaviour when working with or engaging with children and young people.
Reasonable Grounds of Belief	A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A 'reasonable belief' might be formed when: ● a child states that they have been abused ● a child states that they know someone who has been abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves) ● someone who knows a child states that the child has been abused ● professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been abused ● signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been abused.
Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a child in any form of sexual activity. Behaviours sex offenders engage in may include: ● touching or fondling ● obscene or suggestive phone calls/texts ● exhibitionism and or voyeurism ● pornographic images ● penetration with penis, finger or other object into the mouth, anus or vagina It is important to note that sexual abuse includes both contact and non-contact behaviours.
Sexual Exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution.
Sexually Harmful Behaviour	Refers to harmful behaviour perpetrated by a child (17 years of age or younger) to another child. Harmful behaviours in children are often an indicator that they have experienced abuse or neglect. Where sexually harmful behaviour occurs, organisations have a duty of care to both children. Note that in children under 10 years of age, such behaviour is usually referred to as *sexually problematic behaviour.*
The Act	*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*

Appendix 5: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not mean that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the occurrence of an indicator or multiple indicators should alert employees and volunteers to the possibility of child abuse and neglect. Equally, abuse and neglect may occur without the presence of obvious indicators, so staff and volunteers should remain open and aware and utilise their professional judgment to assess risk. The following list includes examples of indicators and is not exhaustive.

Abuse Type	Indicators
Physical	• Disclosure of abuse • Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts. • Fractured bones, especially where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally • Poisoning • Internal injuries • Showing wariness or distrust of adults. • Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury) • Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home • Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout • Being excessively friendly to strangers • Being very passive and compliant
Sexual Abuse and Exploitation	• Child telling someone that sexual abuse has occurred • Complaining of headaches or stomach pains • Experiencing problems with schoolwork • Sexually transmitted infections • Bleeding • Pregnancy • Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age • Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting • Experiencing difficulties in sleeping • Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers • Unexplained absences, unexplained gifts or money are often signs of sexual exploitation
Grooming	• Showing favouritism to a child • Giving gifts • Befriending the family • Making contact with the child or family out of hours or not within employment role description • Physically touching a child

Emotional	• Disclosure of abuse • Developmental delays • Displaying low self esteem • Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful • Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour • Being highly anxious • Showing delayed speech • Acting like a much younger child, e.g. soiling, wetting pants • Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers
Neglect	• Disclosure of neglect • Frequent hunger • Malnutrition • Poor hygiene • Inappropriate clothing, e.g. Summer clothes in winter • Left unsupervised for long periods • Medical needs not attended to • Abandoned by parents • Stealing food • Staying at school outside school hours • Often being tired, falling asleep in class • Abusing alcohol or drugs • Displaying aggressive behaviour • Not getting on well with peers • Poor socialising habits • Withdrawn, listless, pale and thin
Family Violence	• Disclosure of family violence • Physical injuries • Concentration difficulties • Adjustment difficulties • Anxious or nervous • Depression • Fear of a parent or partner of parent • Isolation from friends and family • Unusual absences • Fear of conflict • Violent outbursts • Aggressive language • Headaches, abdominal pain, stuttering.