CLV CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Community Languages Victoria *Where language and culture come together* ABN: 44 646 483 627 Level 2, 189 Faraday St Carlton, VIC 3053 Phone: (03) 9349 2863 Fax: (03) 9349 2698 Email: info@communitylanguages.org.au Website: **www.communitylanguages.org.au**	Thai Central School Inc, ABN: 72 011 414 727 PO Box 418 Carlton South VIC 3053 Phone:0419 548 538 Email: thai.school.melbourne@gmail.com Website: **www.thaicentralschool.org.au**

The *CLV Child Safety Policy* is accessible on the Community Languages Victoria website at:
https://www.communitylanguages.org.au/

Published by Community Languages Victoria
Level 2, 189 Faraday Street Carlton Vic 3053 Australia
Tel (03) 9349 2683
Fax (03) 9349 2698
Email info@communitylanguages.org.au
Website: https://www.communitylanguages.org.au/

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This version of the Child Safety Policy is an update that applies the New Child Safe Standards which are in effect from 1 July 2022.

Minimum Standards
Ministerial Order 1359 provides the framework for child safety in schools and school boarding premises. It replaces Ministerial Order 870.

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INTRODUCTION

A Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy supports schools and school boarding premises to create and maintain a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe. The policy provides a framework for how schools approach child safety.

All school community members are responsible for caring for children and young people, positively promoting their wellbeing and protecting them from any harm or abuse.

Your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy tells your community about your strategies and arrangements to keep children safe. This policy must be publicly available. This will help you create a shared commitment to keeping children safe. It will also support everyone in your school community to know their responsibilities.

All Community Language schools must have implemented the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359 by 1 July 2022.

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UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARDS

The 11 Child Safe Standards are listed below. Schools that must comply with the Standards must implement all aspects of the 11 Standards.

Each of the Standards is expressed as a statement of an expected outcome that organisations must achieve. The new Standards also include minimum requirements to clarify what you need to do for your organisation.

THE 11 CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

The 11 Child Safe Standards for Child Safe Organisations listed below belong to Victorian Organisations that must comply and implement all aspects of the 11 Standards.

Each of the Standards is expressed as a statement of an expected outcome that organisations must achieve. The new Standards also include minimum requirements to clarify what you need to do for your organisation.

Child Safe Standards is a compulsory framework that supports organisations to promote the safety of children by requiring them to implement policies to prevent, respond to and report allegations of child abuse. The *Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021* will give the Commission and other regulators more powers to assess and enforce compliance with the Child Safe Standards.

There are 11 Child Safe Standards:

Standard 1: Culturally safe environments – Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Standard 2: Leadership, governance, and culture – Ensure that child safety and well-being are embedded in School leadership, governance and culture.

Standard 3: Child and student empowerment – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.

Standard 4: Family engagement – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well-being.

Standard 5: Diversity and equity – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and well-being values in practice.

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Standard 7: Child-focused complaints processes – Ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills, and awareness – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Standard 9: Physical and online environments – Physical and online environments promote safety and well-being while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Standard 10: Review of child safety practices - Implementing the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Standard 11: Implementation of child safety practices – Policies and procedures document how Schools are safe for children, young people, and students.

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STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

At THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as the School's primary and fundamental responsibility.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard, and they are safe and feel safe.

The health, welfare and safety of all children in care are paramount THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. will act on behalf of children to protect their rights to safety and security following legal and regulatory requirements. In cases of suspected child abuse and other welfare concerns, staff will report to the appropriate authorities. All staff working with children take on a duty of care to ensure that all children are protected and safe from harm.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. nominates one Child Safety Officer for each campus. The officer must be up to date with child safety requirements and able to promote and effectively communicate with a range of stakeholders.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. have specific policies, procedures and training that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

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UNDERSTANDING LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Child, Youth and Families Act 2005

The Act 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;
- A belief the child is in need of protection; and/or
- A significant concern before the birth of a child about their wellbeing after their birth

The Act also defines **mandatory reporting** and identifies relevant professions. Under the Act a mandated reporter **must** make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services, Child Protection if:

- they form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse; and
- the parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type and the belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment.

In Victoria, the following professions are considered mandated reporters:

- Registered medical practitioners, midwives, and nurses
- **Registered teachers *(Registered Teachers includes those registered with Permission to Teach)***
- **Principals**
- Police
- People in religious ministries
- Out-of-home care workers
- **Early childhood workers**
- Youth justice workers
- Registered psychologists
- School counsellors

A reasonable belief is a belief on reasonable grounds i.e. if a reasonable person practising the profession or carrying out the duties of the office, position or employment, as the case requires, would have formed the belief on those grounds.

- contemporary graduated monitoring and enforcement powers
- improved information sharing powers

All incidents, suspicions, and disclosures of child abuse must be reported as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

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New Regulatory Framework

A new regulatory framework for the Child Safe Standards was started on 1 January 2023.

The changes make it easier for people to identify who the regulator is for their organisation. New laws came into effect resulting in some organisations having a different regulator. Some organisations that deliver multiple types of services to children may still have more than one regulator.

The framework will provide regulators of the Standards with legal powers to hold organisations to account if they are not complying with the Standards.

This will aid regulators to respond to risks of child abuse and breaches of the Standards.

Relevant Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in Schools (PDF)

Working with Children's Clearance (WWCC) Act 2020

The requirement to obtain a Working with Children Check where a person wants to engage in child-related work and the process to obtain the Working with Children Check is established by the *Worker Screening Act 2020* ('the Act') which came into force on 1st February 2021 and repealed the *Working with Children Act 2005*.

A Working with Children Check is an assessment of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children in Australia. As part of the process, the screening unit will look at criminal history, child protection information, and other information.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Schools and School leaders understand and comply with the legal requirements for undertaking suitability checks including Working with Children Checks for volunteers and visitors who work with children in government School environments.

- Schools must have a registry for staff, teachers, volunteers,committee members, contractors and WWC cards to make sure everyone has the current and valid card.
- Schools must establish and implement School-level policies and procedures to assess and verify the suitability of volunteers and visitors who engage in child-related and child-connected work. These may exceed the requirements of the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) if required.
- Working with Children Checks are required by law for people who engage in child-related work (whether paid or unpaid) as defined in the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic).
- Schools must comply with the volunteer child safety screening requirements of Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – managing the risk of child abuse in Schools and School boarding premises (PDF).

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- In assessing what suitability checks should be undertaken, Schools must consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer or visitor's role. For guidance in assessing risks, refer to the Guidance tab.
- For information relating to suitability checks for all School employees refer to Suitability for Employment Checks and the Recruitment in Schools Policy and Guidelines.

The check aims to prevent people from working with children if records indicate that they may pose an unacceptable risk to children.

The Difference Between the Working with Children Check and Police Check

The Working with Children Check and the Australian National Character Check are two different checks.

The Working with Children Check is an ongoing assessment of a person's eligibility to work with children and involves a check of a person's criminal history and other disciplinary and police information.

A Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check is a point-in-time check that discloses criminal history.

Organisation obligations according to the *Working with Children's Clearance (WWCC) Act 2020*	**Staff and volunteer obligations according to the *Working with Children's Clearance (WWCC) Act 2020***
Prior to engaging an employee or volunteer in child-related work, organisations must check the status of the person's check. Organisations must ensure that employees and volunteers have updated their details to include the name of the organisation. When this has been done, the organisation will receive a confirmation letter. Workers must update their details of employment to include the organisation and the address of the organisation **within 21 days of commencing work** It is important that organisations keep accurate records of the WWCC process including • card numbers (or application receipt numbers) of all works and volunteers • expiry dates and card types • all correspondence from the WWCC VIC	Employees and volunteers must ensure they have the correct type of check (employee or volunteer) when engaging in child-related work. Employees and volunteers must ensure that their details are up to date. Changes to personal and employment details must be made **within 21 days**. Employees and volunteers must notify the WWCC office know if they have been charged or found guilty of any offences

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NEW CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Grooming for Sexual Conduct

The offence of **grooming for sexual conduct** with a child under the age of 16 years is defined as:

> A person of or over the age of 18 years must not communicate, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or a person under whose care, supervision or authority the child is (whether or not a response is made to the communication) with the intention of facilitating the child's engagement in or involvement in a sexual offence with that person or another person who is of or over the age of 18 years.

Failure to Protect Offence

The offence of **failure to protect** a child under the age of 16 years from sexual offence is defined as:

> A person who by reason of the position he or she occupies within a relevant organisation, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of or over the age of 18 years who is associated with the organisation ; and knows that there is a substantial risk that that person will commit a sexual offence against a relevant child must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk.

The failure to protect offence applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk but did not act to protect the child.

The offence applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so. This offence encourages organisations to actively manage the risks of sexual offences being committed against children in their care to protect them from harm.

Failure to Disclose Offence

The offence of **failure to disclose a sexual offence** committed against a child under the age of 16 years is defined as:

> A person of or over the age of 18 years (whether in Victoria or elsewhere), who has information that leads the person to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 years by another person of or over the age of 18 years, must disclose that information to a member of the police force of Victoria as soon as it is practicable to do so,

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unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so. The failure to disclose offence helps to ensure that protecting children from sexual abuse is the responsibility of the whole community.

Mandatory Reporting

All mandatory reporters must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

It's a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances. It's recommended that mandatory reporters follow the four critical actions.

Individuals who are required to report:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals, and early childhood teachers
- school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- registered medical practitioners, nurses and midwives
- police officers
- registered psychologists
- people in religious ministry
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- out-of-home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional, or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare officers, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires organisations involving children to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of any alleged abuse by people employed by:

- the organisation
- volunteers
- contractors
- office holders
- ministers of religion
- officers of a religious body
- foster and kinship carers in a formal care arrangement.

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There are 5 types of 'reportable conduct':

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect.

The Child Employment (Amendment) Act 2022

The *Child Employment (Amendment) Act 2022* improves the regulation of child employment in Victoria. It strengthens protections for children in the workplace and makes it easier for employers to understand their obligations when employing children. The Act applies to the employment of children under the age of 15.

On the 1st of July 2017, the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) began administering a reportable conduct scheme in Victoria. The scheme is designed to improve oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by staff and volunteers.

Under the scheme, the CCYP has the power to:

- oversee and monitor the handling of allegations of child abuse by relevant government departments, religious and non-government organisations
- undertake independent investigations
- scrutinise and audit systems and processes for handling allegations
- monitor and report on trends
- build skills and knowledge within government departments, religious and non-government organisations to ensure they can competently handle allegations of suspected child abuse[1].

[1] Commission for Children and Young People, 'About the Reportable Conduct Scheme', https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/

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EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that schools comply with legal obligations to provide inclusive educational environments where students are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their attributes.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. recognises the diverse circumstances of children and young people and works to celebrate their strengths and individual characteristics and embrace them regardless of their abilities, gender, socio-economic status and cultural background.

Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and respond effectively to children and young people with diverse needs, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and LGBTIQ+.

Schools must take steps to create a school community and learning environment where all students are welcomed, accepted and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or attributes such as race, religious belief or activity, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.

Schools:

- must not unlawfully discriminate when deciding who should be enrolled as a student and on what terms
- must not unlawfully discriminate against a student by denying or limiting access to any benefit provided by the school or by subjecting a student to any other detriment because of the student's attribute
- must not unlawfully discriminate against a student by expelling them because of the student's attribute – refer to Expulsions for more information
- must make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities who require adjustments to enable them to participate in their education and other school activities (for example, school sports, concerts and other events) on the same basis as their peers without a disability
- must take steps to provide an educational setting that is safe for all students and which is free from bullying, unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, disability harassment (such as hurtful or humiliating comments or actions about a person's disability) or victimisation
- must acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
- must encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- must challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biassed behaviours and practices
- must create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values different cultures and identities including Koorie cultures
- must respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimised for making a complaint or asserting their rights.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, RACIAL VILIFICATION AND DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

Community language schools' authorities are required to uphold the values outlined in the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* in relation to their students and the selection, supervision and management of staff**.**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Schools comply with legal obligations to provide inclusive educational environments where students are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their attributes.

- Schools are required to comply with a number of legislative obligations that relate to equal opportunity and human rights
- It is unlawful for Schools to discriminate against students on the basis of certain protected attributes (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation) – refer to 'Definitions' below for a complete list of protected attributes

Schools must comply with federal and state anti-discrimination laws and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2016 (Vic).

Equal Opportunity Act Objectives

The objectives of this Act are:

(a) To eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation, to the greatest possible extent;
(b) To further promote and protect the right to equality set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities;
(c) To encourage the identification and elimination of systemic causes of discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation;
(d) To promote and facilitate the progressive realisation of equality, as far as reasonably practicable by recognising that-
    (i) discrimination can cause social and economic disadvantage and that access to opportunity is not equitably distributed throughout society;
    (ii) equal application of a rule to different groups can have unequal results or outcomes;
    (iii) the achievement of substantive equality may require the making of reasonable adjustments and reasonable accommodation and the taking of special measures;
(e) to enable the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to encourage best practice and facilitate compliance with this Act by undertaking research, educative and enforcement functions;
(f) to enable the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to resolve disputes about discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in a

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timely and effective manner, and to also provide direct access to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for resolution of such disputes.

Definitions

Discrimination is defined in part 2, section 6 of the Equal Opportunity Act as being linked to the following attributes, the basis of which discrimination is prohibited in the area of activity set out in part 4:

(a) age
(b) breastfeeding
(c) employment activity
(d) gender identity
(e) disability
(f) industrial activity
(g) lawful sexual activity
(h) marital status
(i) parental status or status career
(j) physical features
(k) political belief or activity
(l) pregnancy
(m) race
(n) religious belief or activity
(o) sex
(p) sexual orientation
(q) personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes.

In section 7 the meaning of discrimination is defined as **direct** or **indirect discrimination** on the basis of an attribute.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Community languages Schools must choose the best person for the job regardless of:

- race, colour and national origin;
- physical, intellectual or psychological impairment including HIV and AIDS;
- gender;
- marital status (including de facto);
- parental status (including pregnancy);
- religious or political beliefs, activities or practices.

School Authorities should establish and monitor all employment policies, practices and procedures to ensure that equal opportunity principles are followed in all areas of staff management including:

- advertising for positions;
- job descriptions and selection criteria;
- interview questions and processes;
- selection panel composition and practices;
- appointment procedures;

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- training and development;
- transfer, promotion and higher duties;
- discipline and dismissals.

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CHILD SAFEGUARDING

CLV believes that the safety of children is of paramount importance and aims to protect a child's right to be safe from abuse of any kind. CLV will ensure that all parties affected by this policy are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.

Community languages schools must therefore provide an environment that is free from any type of abuse and foster a child's growth and development as per the individual requirements of each child. The staff of community languages Schools should therefore be aware of their obligations and responsibilities regarding the safety of children.

CLV will educate all parties about their roles in creating a child-safe environment, including identifying and responding to signs of child abuse.

CLV requires all Schools to have strategies in place to:

- prevent child abuse;
- encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur;
- improve responses to any allegations of child abuse;
- review these processes regularly.

In addition, all community language schools should provide regular training to their staff on child safety issues to ensure that, in the event, a child has suffered abuse, the School can act quickly in the best interests of the child.

As part of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, three overarching principles require organisations to consider the increased vulnerability of:

- Aboriginal children;
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Children with disabilities

Schools must focus on promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

The 4 R's of safeguarding children are a set of strategies for promoting the welfare and the safety of children. They stand for:

1. ***Recognise*** signs of abuse or potential risks to welfare.
2. ***Respond*** appropriately and promptly to any concerns about child safety.
3. ***Record*** all relevant information accurately and confidentially.
4. ***Refer*** to the appropriate services for further investigation or support.

These strategies are essential in ensuring that you are able to effectively identify risks, respond effectively and refer to where necessary. They help to ensure that vulnerable children and young people receive the protection and support they need.

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FORMS OF ABUSE

Volunteers and employees must understand how child abuse can occur to create a child-safe environment.

Under the ***Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order 1359,*** a child is under the age of 18 years, under ***Mandatory Reporting*** a child is under 17 years of age (qualified) and under the ***Crimes Act*** a child is under 16 years of age (qualified).

For the purposes of the Child Safe Standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:

- Physical child abuse
- Child sexual abuse
- Grooming
- Emotional child abuse
- Neglect
- Family violence
- Children exhibiting inappropriate sexual behaviour

This list is not exhaustive but may include:

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 recurring negative circumstance (such as unrelenting low-level care) or even; or by multiple occasions or events (such as persistent verbal abuse and denigration, inconsistent or harsh disciplines or exposure to family violence.

Multidimensional harm – occurs when more than one abuse type is experienced at the same time, e.g. sexual abuse also involves physical Abuse and Emotional Abuse at the same time.

Emotional abuse – Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence.

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. Emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

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.

Exposure to Family Violence – Family violence is behaviour towards a family member that may include:

- physical violence or threats of violence

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- verbal abuse, including threats
- emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial and social abuse.

A child's exposure to family violence constitutes child abuse. This exposure can be very harmful and may result in physical harm and long-term physical, psychological and emotional trauma. Action must be taken to protect the child, and to mitigate or limit their trauma.

Grooming – Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposely create relationships with children and young people, their families and carers to create a situation where abuse could occur. Grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity.

For example:
- Spending special time with a child, e.g. in private settings, away from the organisation, online;
- Isolating the children or young people from family and peers;
- Giving gifts to a child;
- Showing favouritism;
- Allowing the child to step out of boundaries or rules;
- Touching the child; and
- Testing and breaking professional boundaries

Neglect – Neglect is 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 development are, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Severe neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure a child's safety when exposed to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations.

Physical violence – Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be imposed in many ways, including hitting, beating, shaking, burning, or using weapons (such as belts and paddles).

Sexual offences – occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to their age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activities, including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution and grooming[2].

[2] A new grooming offence commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014. Further information is available on the Department of Justice website

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It is important to note that sexual abuse includes both contact and non-contact behaviours.

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 often indicate that they have experienced abuse or neglect. Where sexually harmful behaviour occurs, organisations have a duty of care to both children. In children under ten years of age, such behaviour is usually referred to as *sexually problematic behaviour.*

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ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Roles & Key Responsibilities

KEY ROLE	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
All Employees, Students, Volunteers and Contractors	• To be aware of, understand and apply the requirements of this policy in all areas of work. • Support THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. and CLV to embed and uphold the Child Safe Policy. • Attend Child Safe training. • Report any abuse/neglect concerns, allegations or disclosures to your child safe officer/principal and relevant authorities. • Understand the legislation and legal obligations to report. • Obtain and maintain a valid Working with Children Check as required for their role. • Where a child is in immediate danger, call 000. • Respond appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.
Child Safety Officer	• Act as the first point of contact for child safety concerns or allegations of abuse within the school. • Consult and liaise with the principal and CLV on the implementation of the Child Safe Standards. • Provide support to the child, the parents/caregivers, the person who reports and the accused person. • Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child(ren). • Decide, considering legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter will be reported to the Police or Child Protection and lodge a report as soon as possible (if required). • Confirm relevant authorities have been notified i.e. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection, Police, DET, CCYP. • Monitor compliance with the child safe policy and reporting procedure and respond appropriately where non-compliance is identified. • Create, develop and support a culture of child safety within [insert school]. • Ensure all employees, students, volunteers and contractors are aware of how to respond appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse. • Review and update the Child Safety Policy annually. • Inform the children and young people about this policy and make it publicly available. • Oversee the implementation of the Child Safe Policy and Reporting Procedure. • Store the Incident Reporting Form for reporting purposes according to [Insert School] privacy policy and procedures.
Principal and	• Demonstrate leadership in child safe practices.

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Other Leaders	• Monitor compliance with the child safe policy and reporting procedure and respond appropriately where non-compliance is identified. • Ensure organisational systems and processes are in place relating to recruitment, training, appraisals and ongoing management of staff and the implementation of the Child Safe Standards. • Undertake or nominate an appropriate delegate where the Child Safety Officer is unavailable. Where this occurs, it must be widely publicised to the school community. • Develop a culture of child safety within the school. • Confirm the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary processes if needed. • Ensure child safe principles are included in risk assessments. • Conduct appropriate child safe recruitment practices and screening processes. • Ensure processes are in place to facilitate the appropriate response to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.
Community Languages Victoria (CLV)	• Continuously develop a culture of child safety within CLV. • Provide information relating to Child Safety via training to new and existing staff and volunteers. • Make child safety resources/templates available to Child Safety Officers and Principals. • Provide support and assistance to child safe officers and principals. • Inform Child Safety Officers of any changes to legislation • Research and share information and updates regarding Child Safe Standards and legislative changes to all employees, volunteers, and contractors. • Develop and distribute child safe materials such as posters and leaflets. • Work with schools to determine if an allegation is a Reportable Conduct offence and oversee any investigations into suspected staff and volunteer misconduct and provide advice in relation to disciplinary procedures as they apply to the Child Safe Standards and Child Safe Policy.

Responsibilities of School Authorities

The below information is a general guide and specific responsibilities should be detailed in your School's Code of Conduct.

School Authorities must:

- Ensure that all staff:
    - are clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection and child safeguarding.
    - are required to observe Child Safe Standards and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.
    - always adhere to School **Child Safe Policy** and **Code of Conduct** and uphold School's **Statement of Commitment** to child safety.

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    - take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
    - are aware of their obligations to immediately report suspected abuse
    - are aware of the indicators when a child may be at risk of harm or significant harm.
- Provide training and development for all staff in the recognition and reporting of abuse and harm.
- Provide reporting procedures and professional standards for care and protection work.
- Ensure that all allegations of child abuse are reported to the School's Mandatory reporter, Child Safety Officer and School Principal, who will ensure any allegation is reported to the police or Child Protection and the CLV Child Safe Officer.
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is safe.
- Ensure all staff have access to relevant acts, regulations, standards, and other resources for them to fulfil their obligations.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification).
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination).
- Promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination).
- Encourage children to have a say and participate in all relevant School activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.
- Ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.

Responsibilities of Mandatory Reporters

Mandatory Reporters must:

- make a report to Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse;
- make a report as soon as practicable after forming a belief;
- make a report on each occasion they form a belief;
- make a report even if the Principal or equivalent does not share their belief; and
- ensure that a report has been made when another mandated reporter has undertaken to make the report.

CODE OF CONDUCT

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The School recognises a Code of Conduct as an essential strategy to help keep children safe from harm. A Code of Conduct lists acceptable behaviours and those that are unacceptable. It identifies professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct is one of the requirements of the Child Safe Standards.

It applies to all school employees, contractors, volunteers and other members of the school community involved in child-related work with students.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct identifies inappropriate behaviour with children in a school environment. The objective is to guide school staff in identifying and regulating their behaviour and the behaviour of other school staff and to protect children from abuse in the school environment.

The School develops the Code of Conduct to provide all staff, volunteers and committee members with clear principles about how they should behave with children. During the development and review process, the School endeavours to include staff, volunteers, committee members, families, and children.

CLV has a template Code of Conduct that your School can adapt and modify, which can be found on the CLV website: Child Safe Standards

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RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR STAFF

Recruitment Process

Community languages schools should follow the procedures below when recruiting staff:

1. Clarify the need for and role of the staff member and develop or review the Job Description:
    - Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions advertised include the standard ***Child Safe Environments*** Clause 13 of Ministerial Order 1359 (as in Standard 9 of the Child Safe Standards) as provided in this **Recruitment Process for Staff** guide.
2. Identify roles to be involved in the shortlisting and interviewing.
3. Advertise the position.
4. Send applicants a copy of the position description.
5. Shortlist applicants based on their skills and experience.
6. Conduct interviews and include child safeguarding questions.
7. Select the most suitable applicant. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the School must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
    - Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
    - Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
    - The person's history of work involving children; and
    - 2-3 references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
8. Conduct 2-3 verbal professional reference checks for the applicant. Follow up with referee reports as they are a critical part of the assessment of the relative merits of each short-listed applicant.
9. Advise the successful applicant in writing including the probation period.
10. Sign an *Agreement of Engagement* and *Child Safety Commitment*.
11. Write letters to unsuccessful applicants.
12. Orientate the new staff member. New staff must have 3 hours mandatory child safety training.
13. All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record-keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
14. Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Staff must be selected against the key selection criteria outlined in the relevant position description. Community languages schools should carry out verbal reference checks before a new employee is engaged. To find the best applicant for the position,

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community language schools must focus on the requirements of the job rather than questions or assumptions about the applicant's circumstances or background. Community languages schools must provide information and training to all staff involved in the advertising, selection and appointment process.

VCE teachers are required to have a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration or a Permission to Teach (PTT).

Advertising Positions

Most positions in community languages Schools should be advertised in community newspapers and radio as well as other relevant avenues. Position descriptions must include the ***Child Safe Environments*** clause as provided in the **Recruitment in Schools Guide**.

Interviewing

The selection panel should draw up a list of interview questions prior to the interviews. All applicants should be asked the same questions. The questions should aim to explore the applicants' relevant skills and experience to perform the duties and include a range of behavioural and values-based questions that will help determine the person's suitability for the position and uncover any potential risks to children.

Each interview should include questions that explore the:

- Motivation to work with children
- Understanding of child abuse in organisational settings, e.g. how it occurs, prevention strategies.
- Work history, including prior positions held, responsibilities, any gaps, and reasons for leaving (especially where previous roles involved work with children).

Particular attention is paid to:

- Answers that indicate a lack of professional boundaries in relation to working with children.
- Answers that are incomplete or concerning.
- Any unusual context for the candidate to be seeking employment with children

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Interview Questions

Community language schools should develop questions about child safety in job interviews.

Plan interview questions which aim to uncover applicant's understanding of child safety and any red flags.

Below are some questions for potential candidates for a teaching position.

A. Experienced/Professionals

1. Why did you decide to become a language teacher?
2. How do you cope with stress?
3. What is your teaching philosophy?
4. How do you use technology in the classroom?
5. Describe your classroom management structure.
6. How do you feel about classroom observations and walk-throughs?
7. What impact does trauma have on student learning? How do you address this in your classroom?
8. What role do you believe diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives should play in your classroom and in the School?
9. How will you encourage parents to support their children's education?
10. What are some methods you use to check for understanding as you're teaching?
11. How do you assess students' progress?
12. What are your thoughts about grades?
13. Why do you want to teach at this school?
14. What is the greatest challenge for teachers at community language schools today?
15. How would you handle a parent challenging your teaching methods, curriculum and/or classroom management?
16. How will you meet the needs of the students in your class who are advanced or say they're bored?
17. How will you engage reluctant learners?
18. Describe a troubling student you've taught. What did you do to get through to them?
19. Tell us about a mistake you made with a student. What happened, and how did you address it?
20. What are five traits you consider necessary for a child protection officer?
21. What three words would your peers, administrators, or students use to describe you?
22. What do you feel you can contribute to our School?
23. Which component of your résumé are you most proud of and why?
24. How do you keep up to date with child protection laws?
25. What do you think is the most important thing to remember when interacting with a vulnerable child?

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B. Beginners or non-professionals

1. Why did you decide to become a language teacher?
2. How do you cope with stress?
3. What is your teaching philosophy?
4. How would you use technology in the classroom?
5. How do you feel about ongoing learning?
6. How do you feel about classroom observations and walk-throughs?
7. Are you aware of Child Safe School Policies and Child Safe Standards?
8. What role do you believe diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives should play in your classroom and in the school?
9. How will you encourage parents to support their children's education?
10. What are some methods you would use to check for understanding as you're teaching?
11. How would you assess students' progress?
12. What are your thoughts about grades?
13. Did you ever attend [INSERT LANGUAGE] School as a child?
14. Why do you want to teach at this school?
15. How would you handle a parent challenging your teaching methods, curriculum and/or classroom management?
16. How will you meet the needs of the students in your class who are advanced or say they're bored?
17. How will you engage reluctant learners?
18. How would you get through to a "troubling" student?
19. If you were accepted for the position, what would be your biggest worry or concern?
20. What three words would your peers, administrators, or students use to describe you?
21. What do you feel you can contribute to our School?
22. Which component of your résumé are you most proud of and why?
23. Where do you see yourself in 5 or 10 years?

Reference Checks

Reference checks are a critical part of the assessment of the relative merits of each short-listed applicant. Such reports allow for a rigorous checking of claims made by applicants and the gathering of evidence on work performance. Referees have directly supervised the candidate and observed their interactions with children. Staff responsible for conducting reference checks are confident and probing in their questions, e.g. asking referees whether they have ever had any concerns about the candidate's suitability to work with children. All referees should be asked the same questions and the completed template is kept with the candidate's HR file.

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Procedures When a New Staff Member is Recruited

When a new employee is appointed to a position at a community language school, the following procedures apply:

- an *Agreement of Engagement* specifying all the terms and conditions of employment is signed by the employee and the School Education Leader and a copy given to the employee;
- the employee has a copy of their job description which includes the following statement:

CLV Schools are child safe environments. Our School actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all School staff and volunteers are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the School environment, in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. Our School's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct is available on our School website.

- an employee record card is completed;
- the employee Tax Declaration Form is completed and forwarded to the Australian Tax Office;
- a page in the wages book is set up for the employee;
- the employee is given time to read the school orientation kit, and the opportunity to ask any questions;
- when practicable, a handover is arranged with the previous occupant of the position;
- the contents of this *Student Safety and Staff Welfare Manual* are explained to them.
- all staff, volunteers and committee members must undertake three hours of compulsory Child Safety training
- all staff, volunteers and committee members must sign a Code of Conduct annually to ensure they have read and understood its contents.

Conditions of Employment

The conditions of employment for community languages schools' staff are specified below:

- All employees should have a job description which specifies their roles and responsibilities. Job descriptions should be reviewed as required. Each person should be given a copy of their job description prior to their commencing employment and whenever their job description is changed. School policy regarding conditions of employment needs to be specified in the *Agreement of Employment*.
- All employees should have an *Agreement of Engagement*, which is to be signed by their employer.
- Each employee shall be given a copy of their signed *Agreement of Employment* prior to commencing employment.

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- Job descriptions and Agreements of Employment should incorporate child safe messaging.

Probationary Period

Our probation period is for 3 months. If the School Management Committee (or School Leadership) is not happy with the employee's performance their employment can be terminated during the period of the Agreement by giving at least 14 days' notice in writing. Probation periods can help Schools assess an inexperienced employee's performance and suitability for the job before confirming their permanent employment. If there are any concerns about the person working with children, Schools should seriously consider whether they want them to remain in the job and their organisation.

Staff Information

HR files must be kept of all employees. Each file should include:

- their signed *Agreement of Engagement*
- their job description
- a completed record card
- signed Code of Conduct
- copy of their WWCC
- details of any training attended
- notes on their performance
- any other relevant information.

Staff are entitled to see their file at any suitable time to be arranged with their Manager.

Staff Orientation Kit

The School Leadership at community languages Schools will maintain an Orientation Kit and give it to all new staff on recruitment. The Orientation Kit should include the following:

- School name, address, phone numbers and fax numbers;
- School philosophy and objectives;
- School organisation chart and management model;
- Staff roles, rights and responsibilities;
- Pay day and method of payment (if applicable);
- Date and frequency of staff meetings;
- Job description and *Agreement of Engagement*;
- Staff code of behaviour;
- Child Safety Policy and other important policies;
- Organisational and Administrative Manual.

Staff Supervision and Support

Supervision and support are important to ensure that staff are supported in their work and that their work is carried out effectively. All staff and volunteers should be provided with regular supervision. This will include an annual performance appraisal. Supervision

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can be formal meetings or informal chats and catch ups. All staff should contact the principal if issues arise. The Chairperson of the School Management Committee/School Education Leader (or other nominated senior staff member) is responsible for providing supervision and support. The staff member responsible for supervision and performance appraisal must have relevant skills and experience.

Performance Appraisal

CLV and community languages schools are committed to supporting their staff to improve their own efficiency and effectiveness. All staff are expected to perform their duties to the best of their ability and to show a high level of personal commitment to providing a quality, professional service at all times. Performance appraisals will be conducted annually for employees by an appointed School Leader who is his/her Manager. Performance appraisals must be based on job descriptions and agreed work plans. Performance appraisals will also be carried out for regular volunteers at Schools. All staff should be encouraged to attend relevant professional development and training provided by CLV.

The aims of the performance appraisal are:

- to allow free and confidential discussions about work between a staff member and their manager;
- to discuss the staff member's job performance, in comparison with set standards;
- to discuss any work problems and search for a solution;
- to discuss means of improving work performance including identification of training and development needs.
- to cover other areas that intersect with the workplace e.g. Child safeguarding

The Senior Staff Member conducting the performance appraisal should:

- review the job requirements so they are fully aware of them;
- review the goals and objectives or job expectations previously agreed to with the staff member (these may have been agreed to in the last performance appraisal);
- give the staff member a copy of the *Performance Appraisal Form* to complete before the appraisal session and arrange a time for the appraisal;
- review the staff member's history: skills, training, experience, past performance appraisals etc;
- use the *Performance Appraisal Form* to assess the staff member's job performance against the expectations of the position using all sources of information available to them and rate each area or duty from unacceptable to outstanding;
- note performance issues, which need to be discussed with the staff member;
- include strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for development. Provide specific examples, especially where performance is poorly rated;
- be open and honest. Try to be positive even when dealing with negative issues. Keep in mind that this is a positive meeting for the benefit of the staff member and the person conducting the appraisal;
- write up the performance appraisal;

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- include all issues covered, actions to be taken, timelines and staff member comments.

Performance Dispute Procedure

The Performance Dispute Procedure is the procedure for dealing with issues of poor performance or concerns relating to an employee. The procedure provides staff with an opportunity to improve their performance through training and trial periods.

The following is the procedure for dealing with a performance dispute not involving misconduct, which may result in suspension from duties while an investigation takes place. It should also be included in the *Agreement of Employment*.

Any performance or behavioural issues should be addressed in a timely and professional manner.

Step 1: Verbal Warning
The employee will be told as soon as possible of any complaint concerning the performance of his/her work and will be provided with an opportunity to discuss the complaint. If appropriate, the Manager will, in consultation with the employee, outline how the employee must improve his/her performance. Any assistance needed by the employee to improve his/her performance will be identified and provided where possible. A date to review the employee's performance will be set.

Step 2: First Written Warning
If at the time of review set in Step 1, the employee's performance is still unsatisfactory, there will be further discussion with the employee. This will include the employee, a representative of their choice and their Manager.

The complaint against the employee and plans for improvement will be recorded in writing and a copy given to the employee clearly stating that a lack of improvement by a given time will result in a final written warning

Step 3: Final Written Warning
If at the date set in Step 2, the employee's performance has not improved, there will be further discussion with him/her. This will include the employee, a representative of their choice and their Manager.

The complaint against the employee and plans for improvement will be recorded in writing and a copy given to the employee clearly stating that a lack of improvement by a given time will result in termination of employment.

Step 4: Termination of Employment
If the problem persists after the final written warning the employer may terminate the employment of the employee. The Manager represents the employer and has the authority to dismiss staff.

Detailed notes of above meetings must be recorded and kept with the person's HR file.

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Misconduct and Serious Misconduct

Misconduct and serious misconduct are unacceptable behaviour by a staff member or volunteer. Misconduct includes breaches of School rules and policies, which may warrant an investigation and then further action.

Serious misconduct includes breaches of School rules and policies e.g. allegations of child abuse, allegations of theft and may warrant the instant dismissal of an employee or a suspension from duties while an investigation takes place.

Community language schools are committed to preventing a person from having contact with children or young people if they pose an unacceptable risk. Following a formal investigation, a confirmed breach of the Code of Conduct or child-related policy will lead to disciplinary procedures which may involve termination of employment or contract. Serious breaches of this policy and related procedures may be reported to Police.

Examples of misconduct include:

- theft of property or funds from community languages schools;
- wilful damage of school property;
- intoxication through alcohol or other substances during working hours;
- breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- breaches of school policies;
- verbal or physical harassment of any students, staff or parents particularly in respect of race, sex or religion;
- disclosure of confidential information regarding the organisation to any other party without prior permission;
- the disclosure of information concerning the students, staff or parents of the School other than the information that is necessary to assist them and to ensure their safety;
- carrying on a personal business from School premises or using the School's resources for personal business;
- falsification of any School records for personal gain or on behalf of any other staff member; and
- failure to comply with the Staff Code of Behaviour.

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Staff Exit Procedure

When an employee leaves a community language school, an exit interview or termination interview must be arranged. The exit interview should be conducted by the School Administration Leader or a member of the School Management Committee (not the employee's direct report) and provides useful feedback about the School for use in planning and evaluation.

The following provides an outline of an exit interview to assist community languages Schools:

- Questions regarding the implementation and promotion of child safety

Prepare the employee's termination payment:

- calculate ordinary wages due or wages in lieu of notice;
- calculate annual leave due to the date of termination. This is paid at the employee's current rate of pay;
- calculate leave loading in accordance with the employment contract;
- check if the employee is entitled to pro-rata long service leave;
- check if any allowances are owing (e.g. travel, meals);
- check if the employee owes the community language School monies;
- prepare a written statement showing the detailed calculation of all monies to be paid to the employee;
- make sure there is a letter of resignation from the employee if they resigned, or a letter of termination if they were dismissed;
- If requested, prepare a written statement of employment detailing the period of employment and type of work performed.

If appropriate, prepare a reference and make sure that property belonging to the community language school is returned, including keys, files and equipment.

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ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. is committed to ensuring concerns, allegations and disclosures are reported through appropriate channels, including Child Protection and Victoria Police.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. prioritises the safety and well-being of children above all else and recognise they all have a responsibility to keep children safe. THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. considers all staff, volunteers and committee members to be obliged to report at all times, i.e. any child safety concerns must be declared along internal and external reporting lines.

Call the police on 000 if you are concerned about a child's safety.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. takes all allegations and concerns seriously and has practices to investigate thoroughly and quickly. We ensure all children, families, staff, and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they are concerned about a child's safety or well-being or if they observe inappropriate behaviour.

Child safety concerns may arise in a range of ways, including:

- **Disclosure:** a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may be referring to themselves)
- **Observation:** a child's behaviour or development leads a person to form a belief that the child has been abused
- **Information received from others:** Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse or revealed that a child is being abused

Employees and volunteers must remain open and aware of the various ways concerns may arise. Child abuse may occur in the context of THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. activity or outside THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC., e.g. at home or in another organisation. THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. expects staff and volunteers to be alert to abuse in all contexts and report concerns following this policy.

All staff, volunteers and committee members must be aware of the *Failure to Disclose Offence* which creates an obligation for all adults to report a reasonable belief that a child has been sexually abused to the police.

More information on reporting legislation can be found in Appendix 3.

Internal and external reporting processes must always be adhered to. THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. recognises that internal processes must never interfere with external obligations and will support staff and volunteers in fulfilling those obligations.

The THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. Reporting Procedure can be found in Appendix 5.

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COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- families understand how their complaint is managed and how it can be escalated, if required
- CLV demonstrates how it responds to complaints in a fair, effective and efficient manner.

The Complaints Policies and Procedures must be:

- child-focused;
- easy to understand;
- culturally safe; and
- accessible.

This means students can understand what to do and who to talk to if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. This includes procedures that children can understand and follow if they need to.

School must ensure that they:

- take complaints seriously, and respond to them promptly and thoroughly;
- cooperate with law enforcement;
- meet reporting, privacy and employment law obligations.

A grievance or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived issue at a school where a response or resolution is expected.

The dissatisfaction will usually arise from a perception that the school has:

- done something wrong
- failed to do something it should have
- acted unfairly or inappropriately

The complaint may be about an individual staff member, a student or a policy or procedure. Examples may include issues related to:

- student discipline procedures;
- learning and teaching;
- students requiring educational adjustment;
- damage/loss of personal property;
- bullying and harassment by students against other students.

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Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following terms are defined as follows:

A **'parent'**, in relation to a child, includes a guardian and any person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the Family Law Act of the Commonwealth, and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

A **'complaint'** is an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or verbal, with an action taken, decision made, or service provided, or the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision at a School.

A '**complainant**' is the party making the complaint.

A '**support person**' is someone who assists the complainant through the complaint process.

An '**advocate**' is someone acting on behalf of the complainant.

Students with a Disability

Students with disabilities have rights under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth), the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Commonwealth) and *the Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Victoria) to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers, including the right to reasonable adjustments.

As with all complaints to which this policy applies, families raise any concerns or complaints regarding the treatment of a student with a disability with the School in the first instance. The Regional Disabilities Coordinator or designated regional officer can provide advice to families when they are seeking to raise a concern or make a complaint at their School.

Process for Handling Complaints (Internal)

The following staff / parent / student grievance procedure developed for community languages schools, specifies the procedures staff, parents and students can follow if they have a grievance.

Step 1
Those with a complaint should approach an appropriate officer for discussion and advice on the issue. The discussion is confidential. The complaint can be face-to-face, by phone or email.

Step 2

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If the problem is not resolved in Step 1, the complainant may put the issue in writing (letter or email) and request that the issue be raised with the School Management Committee/School Principal at the next committee meeting. The School Management Committee/ School Principal shall make a decision on the issue and advise the complainant within 7 days or let the complainant know of a timeframe if it will be longer.

Step 3
If the problem is not resolved in Step 2, the complainant may attend a meeting of the School Management Committee/ School Principal and shall be entitled to address that meeting.

The complainant may be accompanied by a representative of their choice.

The complainant may request that the person against whom the complaint is being made not be present while they address the meeting. The School Management Committee/School Principal shall make a decision on the issue and advise the complainant of their decision within 7 days.

A full report should be provided to the School Management Committee/School Principal and the complainant.

If the matter is not resolved internally, refer to the **Process for Handling Complaints (External)**.

In matters of curriculum and assessment, the complainant may seek advice from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessments Authority (VCAA): Pages - Complaints handling policy and procedure

Process for Handling Complaints (External)

A positive relationship between students, parents and school staff is critical in realising and maintaining the best possible educational outcomes.

Complaints can be resolved early when a concern is first raised with the person responsible for the situation. CLV provides a three-step framework to help resolve complaints:

STEP 1: Raise the complaint with the school

If the matter relates to a Teacher, School Administrator or Principal, the complainant raises it with them first. This will typically result in the quickest response and is often in the best interest of the student.

STEP 2: Raise the complaint with CLV

If a mutually agreed resolution cannot be reached or the complainant feels uncomfortable raising the complaint directly with the school, they can escalate the complaint to the CLV Office for resolution. See **Complaints Form** in the Appendix and on the CLV website.

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CLV Complaints and Grievances Handling Procedure

A good complaints process will be:

- Fair
- Confidential
- Transparent
- Accessible
- Efficient

In preparation for raising a concern or complaint, CLV encourages parents, guardians, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues one wishes to discuss;
- remember that one may not have all the facts relating to the issues needing to be raised;
- think about how the matter could be resolved;
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by CLV on its website.

The CLV Complaints and Grievances Handling Procedure is as follows:

1. **Record receipt of the complaint.**

   Recipient of complaint, whether formal or informal, is to note the date and time of the receipt/making of complaint and create an electronic file for the complaint.

2. **Acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant.**

   Acknowledge receipt of the complaint no later than five business days from the date of receipt.

3. **Notify CLV's Executive Director of any formal complaint.**

   The recipient of the complaint is to notify the executive director of the receipt of a formal complaint. Within five business days of the date of the acknowledgement of the complaint.

4. **Assess the formal complaint and identify the issues.**

   A CLV staff member is assigned responsibility for assessing and investigating the complaint. CLV will make an objective and fair assessment on the weight of the evidence available. CLV will document the recommended decision and outcome. CLV makes a decision about whether the complaint is substantiated, and what further action, if any, should be taken.

5. **Take required action.**

   Whether or not a complaint is substantiated, the investigation may identify actions required to be taken. The CLV Executive Director is responsible for

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ensuring that necessary action is taken as soon as practicable, including where appropriate:

- The reversal of a decision made in relation to the complainant.
- A review and changes to CLV Policy and Procedures.
- Further action under policies including in relation to CLV staff, for example, for misconduct and/or unsatisfactory performance.
- A referral of the subject matter of the complaint, or another matter, to an external body or person.

6. **Close the complaint.**

   Once the matter is resolved and required action has been taken, close the complaint file and archive it.

Resolution From Raising the Complaint with CLV

Where appropriate, CLV may seek to resolve a complaint through any of the following:

- an apology or expression of regret;
- a change of decision;
- a change of policy, procedure or practice;
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, CLV may also ask to attend a meeting with an independent third party, or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute (See Step 3)

STEP 3: Raise the complaint with a third party mediator.

If the matter still cannot be resolved by CLV, refer to the Dispute Settlement of Victoria: Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be accepted. However, it may not be possible to investigate the matters thoroughly or at all, without sufficient information. It will not be possible to provide a response to an anonymous complainant.

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Key Responsibilities

Position/Roles	Responsibilities
CLV	If a mutually agreed resolution cannot be reached or the complainant feels uncomfortable raising the complaint directly with the school, CLV Office is responsible to help resolve the complaint by following the CLV Complaints and Grievances Handling Procedure.
School Council	Ensure appropriate policy and procedures exist to deal with concerns and complaints. Deal with complaints related to the actions or decisions of the Principal.
School Principal	Ensure that the College conducts proper and transparent grievance processes to investigate and resolve any such complaints. Ensure this policy is easily accessible, by publishing it on the School's website.
Staff	Adhere to this policy and procedure to ensure consistent and fair treatment of all concerns and complaints.
Parents and Students	Raise a concern or complaint directly with the person involved in an attempt to resolve the matter initially informally. Raise any unresolved issues following the procedures detailed in this policy.

School Role

The Principal is responsible for the efficient and effective organisation, management and administration of the school including the school's complaint-handling processes.

Schools are required to:

- always consider their duty of care to the student or students involved in the complaint
- ensure teachers are advised about the complaint where appropriate
- develop and publish a complaints policy for their school which explains the processes at the school for raising concerns or complaints including:
    1) who to contact to raise a concern or complaint at the school

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2) actions upon receipt of a complaint
3) timeframes for acknowledgement and resolution of a complaint
4) potential outcomes
5) escalation process

- keep written records of complaints and document all steps taken to achieve agreement
- train all school staff on the school's complaint-handling procedures and provide development opportunities on complaint management

School Responsibilities

The responsibility of the school is to work with the complainant (and student if appropriate) to achieve a mutually agreed resolution. When a complaint is raised, the Principal (or delegate):

- acknowledges receipt of a complaint
- speaks with the complainant to ensure they are aware of the school's complaint policy, and to better understand the issues or problem. If the complainant has not raised the issue with the relevant teacher, the Principal can ask them to initiate discussions with the teacher in the first instance, if appropriate in the circumstances.

Where the complaint cannot be, or isn't appropriate to be, resolved with the Teacher, the Principal:

- provides a prompt response with indicative timelines relevant to the nature of the complaint
- speaks with the complainant to ensure they understand the problem and provides any additional support to help resolve the complaint
- acknowledges the goal is to endeavour to achieve an outcome that supports the best interests and wellbeing of the student and that is, where possible, acceptable to all parties
- advises the complainant how the complaint will be addressed
- provides updates throughout the process as agreed with the complainant
- seeks advice from appropriate units within the CLV office and/or external agencies
- considers the wellbeing of students, teachers and other staff members
- in situations where further time is required, will consult with the complainant and discuss any interim solutions.

Where appropriate the Principal:

- may arrange a meeting with the complainant, Teacher/s and/or Assistant Principal
- discusses the school's findings with the complainant in an attempt to reach an agreed resolution
- communicates to the complainant steps they have taken or intend to take to prevent a similar incident or issue from occurring again.

Sample Acknowledgement Letter to Complainant

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Dear [NAME], I refer to information provided by you/your son/your daughter, [child's name], to [name], [position], regarding the attached complaint.

The matter has been referred to me and I propose dealing with it by [state the process]. Please let me know if you have any comments or requests about the process of resolving the complaint.

You will be contacted at various stages of the process regarding progress of the complaint. If you require any information, please contact me on [telephone number].

Yours sincerely,

Name

Date

Appeal

The School Management Committee/ School Principal must ensure that their decisions are in line with the relevant Acts of Parliament, which govern the employment of staff or curriculum issues.

If a staff member feels that they have been unfairly treated, they may consult with the relevant Union or the Industrial Relations Commission of Victoria .

If a staff member feels that they have been unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, etc. they may refer the issue to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

Staff should be made aware of their rights to consult with the Industrial Relations Commission of Victoria or the Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

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RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

This policy sets out the requirements for Schools to identify and manage risks that might affect their students, staff or operations.

Definitions

Objective - An objective is an aspirational, results-oriented statement describing what your School intends to achieve within the set timeframe, and describes what successful delivery would entail.

Risk - The effect (whether positive or negative) of uncertainty on objectives.

Risk Management - The identification, analysis, assessment and prioritisation of risks to the achievement of an objective.

Risk management involves the coordinated allocation of resources to:

- minimise, monitor, communicate and control risk likelihood and/or impact, or
- maximise the potential presented by opportunities.

Risk management includes coordinated activities to direct and control risks to the achievement of an objective.

Risk Register - A formatted list that records identified risks, assesses their impact and describes the actions (controls) to be taken to mitigate them. Typically, it describes the risk, the causes for that risk and the responsible person or group for managing it.

Control - A control is any existing measure that modifies risk such as uniform policy or staff succession plan.

Controls are methods or procedures that assist in achieving objectives, safeguarding assets, ensuring financial information is accurate and reliable and supporting compliance with all financial and operational requirements.

Identifying current controls and their effectiveness is one of the most important aspects of risk management. It allows you to better understand the elements that are impacting the likelihood and/or consequence of a risk.

Treatment - A risk treatment is an action you undertake to reduce a risk to an acceptable level, by adding new or improving/modifying existing controls.

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Community languages schools are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, they must proactively manage risks of abuse to children.

- They must have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff member is to have contact with a child on social media).
- In addition to occupational health and safety concerns, a Risk Management Strategy should analyse the risk of 'harm' to children and young people.
- Schools are responsible for delivering the risk management strategy to suit the relevant needs of their school environment and circumstances. A **Risk Management Template** is provided on the CLV website to assist schools in developing their Children and Young People Risk Management Strategy.
- School has a duty of care to prevent harm before it occurs and will do its utmost to assess and mitigate risks in relation to its activities and services.
- School is a learning organisation and commits to reviewing any serious incidents or breaches of policy and procedure or order to ensure that learning can be utilised to strengthen child safety across the school.
- School's risk management strategy is designed to suit its needs and accounts for possible risks in both physical and online environments.
- School listens to what children and young people have to say about what keeps them safe/unsafe and their likes/dislikes.

School staff and volunteers need to have a clear understanding of:

- Potential risks to children and young people.
- Identifying and assessing the risks associated with the specific services and activities it delivers
- How to develop a plan to prevent risks, or to address them effectively when they occur.

Risk Management Process for Schools

The Risk Management Process for Schools contains the following steps:

Step 1 — Establish the context
Step 2 — Risk identification
Step 3 — Risk analysis
Step 4 — Evaluation
Step 5 — Risk treatment
Step 6 — Communication and consultation
Step 7 — Monitoring and review
Step 8 — Recording and reporting

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1. Establishing the context

Before identifying risks, the CLV school will decide on the scope of the activity, including the objectives, and develop an understanding of the operating environment. Identifying the stakeholders (both internal and external) and considering their concerns, issues and expectations.

2. Risk identification

Risk identification means thinking about what could go wrong when delivering the objectives.

3. Risk analysis

Assess each risk to determine the overall level of risk (the 'risk rating').

This involves:

- identifying any existing controls
- considering the consequences (effect) if the risk eventuates, and
- the likelihood that the risk will occur

4. Risk evaluation

Evaluate each risk to determine whether the level of risk is acceptable and the appropriate response to the risk. The levels of acceptability relate to the risk rating levels and are described as:

- Extreme
- High
- Medium
- Low

5. Risk treatment

A risk treatment is the way in which the school responds to a risk. Options for risk treatments include:

- **Share:** if practical, share all or some of the risk with outsourced parties or insurers.
- **Terminate:** cease the activity altogether.
- **Accept:** this will require appropriate authority.
- **Reduce:** apply additional treatments until the risk is reduced to an acceptable level

6. Communication and consultation

Consult and update relevant internal and external stakeholders throughout the risk management process.

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Report on risks that are shared with relevant stakeholders to provide assurance that the school is managing the risk appropriately.

7. Monitoring and review

Schedule monitoring and review periods at intervals appropriate to the nature of the objective and the level of risk.

8. Recording and reporting risk

All schools must use CLV's Risk Management Process for schools when assessing and documenting the risk(s) associated with:

- Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning
- Child Safe Standards
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Excursions and incursions

When assessing the risks listed above, schools must document the identified risks in a Risk Management Register and they can use the Risk Assessment Template to assist in their risk assessment. Schools are responsible for keeping a record of the site specific Risk Register and ensuring it is available to all relevant persons.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's cycle every two years.

Communication of the Risk Management Policy

Principals and/or School Council are responsible for:

- providing staff with relevant training opportunities to support staff to manage risks at an operational level
- ensuring that all school staff follow CLV policies and processes, as risk management is integrated into other policies and processes.

Types of communication schools can include their Risk Management policy in:

- Social media / newsletter
- Emails
- Regular risk reports produced for the executive, board, or other stakeholders
- Periodic risk identification / awareness workshops
- Articles included in intranet, emails etc
- Presentations at meetings
- Risk management messages in annual report
- Delivering training including induction / orientation programs

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MANAGING AND REPORTING SCHOOL INCIDENTS (INCLUDING EMERGENCIES)

Policy

This policy describes the requirements for managing and reporting school incidents, including emergencies.

This policy applies to incidents that occur during or outside school hours at the following locations:

- CLV Schools
- services delivered by School councils within the School environment including:
    - outside school hours care
    - VCE programs delivered as part of a CLV School program
- during travel to and from School
- online School environments
- school camps, excursions, or outdoor adventure activities
- any other location where there is subsequent impact on students or the School community.

This policy and associated guidelines and procedures apply to incidents that impact students and/or school operations that are brought to the attention of the school regardless of when and where they occurred, provided they impact on the student or other students within the school environment, including camps and excursions.

Schools must manage and report incidents in accordance with the guidance and procedures described.

An incident is an actual or alleged event or situation that:

- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to a student's health, safety or well being either directly or indirectly while under the care or supervision of the School, including international students (for more information about reporting international student related critical incidents, please refer to: Critical incident flowchart (PDF))
- impacts a student and is brought to the attention of the School, regardless of when or where it occurred, provided it is impacting on the student or other students within the School environment
- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to an employee's health, safety or well being either directly or indirectly in the work setting
- effects or risks affecting the continuity of School operations, including matters of security (including cyber security), property damage and emergencies
- requires police notification or involves matters of serious conduct
- is a WorkSafe notifiable incident.

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This policy outlines measures Schools must take to support students to engage with digital technology in a safe and responsible way.

Summary

- CLV Schools have a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to ensure digital learning is conducted in a safe and responsible manner.
- CLV Schools must ensure students are aware of expectations relating to the safe, responsible and ethical use of digital technologies. The Department has developed acceptable use agreement templates, to support Schools with this requirement.
- Online safety should be included in curriculum planning.
- Online incidents of concern must be managed in accordance with CLV's policy on **Managing and Reporting School Incidents**, as well as any other School policy relevant to the type of incident.

Key Points

Principals and teachers have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students from any harm that should have reasonably been foreseen, including those that may be encountered within the online learning environment.

It is essential that Principals work in partnership with their staff and school community to:

- develop holistic policies that reflect the teaching and learning practices, strategies and technologies that are being used by teachers and students
- create clear processes and practices to manage classroom and online behaviour and respond to any incidents that may arise
- prepare curriculum plans that explicitly teach safe, responsible and ethical online behaviours
- implement and raise awareness of the School's policies, processes and plans
- ensure students are aware of behavioural expectations when engaging in digital learning activities.
- recommend that parents discuss, develop and implement a similar 'family agreement' at home. This will assist students to understand what is and isn't appropriate behaviour and that appropriate behaviour is expected everywhere and anytime they are online.

Supervision When Using Digital Technology in the Classroom

Consistent with their duty of care to students, teachers are required to adequately supervise students when using digital technology in the classroom. Schools should have

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measures in place to ensure students are appropriately supervised when engaged in online learning.

Such measures might include:

- moving around the room to regularly monitor screens
- installing remote access software that enables teacher access to individual students' 1 to 1 learning device used in class
- actively reinforcing learning and behavioural expectations during the activity.

Posting Photographs Online

When including photographs of students in online platforms and applications, it is important to consider risk and consent. Refer to: Photographing, Filming and Recording Students or the template on the CLV website.

Responding to Online Incidents

Schools must respond to any online incident in accordance with the CLV policy on **Managing and Reporting School Incidents (Including Emergencies)**, as well as any other school policy relevant to this type of incident, such as the school's **Anti Bullying Policy**, or the CLV **Privacy Policy** and associated guidance.

For information on managing cyberbullying specifically, refer to:

- Bullying Prevention and Response
- Bully Stoppers
- Student Engagement

Key Definitions

Cyber Safety: refers to safe and desirable practices in online environments and the use of electronic and ICT equipment devices.

ICT Equipment/Devices: in this document includes, but is not limited to, computers, laptops, tablets, storage devices, cameras, all types of mobile phones, video and audio players/receivers, social networking sites, and any other technologies as they come into use.

Cyber Bullying: involves the unwanted use of electronic equipment devices to harass and cause discomfort to other members of the School community.

Behaving Safely Online Means:

- protecting their own privacy and personal information
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute

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- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting a parent/ guardian or teacher know if something is 'not quite right' These principles of safety and responsibility apply to internet and social media use at home and School.

CLV's Responsibilities

- To provide students with an awareness of the benefits and risks of using ICT
- To integrate cyber safety education into the curriculum with other school safety issues
- To promote staff awareness of the professional responsibilities for students' safety in the area of cyber safety
- To provide professional learning in regarding cyber safety issues
- To provide information for parents through avenues such as the School: information nights, newsletter, website, and posters
- To liaise with outside agencies to offer education programs Cyber Safety Policy

Students' Responsibilities

- To sign an agreement to abide by the School's cyber safety policy, that aims to prevent bullying and harassment
- To ensure that all material being accessed on the internet is appropriate
- To seek CLV clarification about accessing websites or other sources of information where they may be unsure of content
- To ensure that student communications with other students, staff members and members of the outside community do not harass, vilify or attack personally other individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, written words and the posting of images
- Where ICT equipment devices are used out of School time, report any communications which are inappropriate to parent/guardians or a teacher.

Parents' Responsibilities

- To support the School in encouraging responsible communication using ICT equipment/devices.
- To explain the internet use permission form to their child/children

Schools' Responsibilities

- Promote safe and responsible use of ICT devices.
- Investigate and act upon all cases of misuse of ICT equipment and devices.

School-Based Actions and Consequences

- In accordance with the school's policies and procedures and CLV guidelines.

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Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually.

Supporting Documentation

- eSafety Commissioner
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies: Policy | education.vic.gov.au
- A Step-by-Step Guide for Responding to Online Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour Affecting Students
- eSmart
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies: Policy | education.vic.gov.au
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

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REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' response to their worker's and volunteers' allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct. The scheme is established by the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.*

The Commission for Children and Young People is responsible for administering the scheme.

Summary

Principals must notify CCYP as soon as possible after becoming aware of a reportable conduct allegation involving any employees, contractors, volunteers (including parents) and school council employees.

CLV will assess the allegations and report them to the Commission for Children and Young People, if appropriate.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not change or replace other reporting obligations such as mandatory reporting.

Details

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is a child safety mechanism introduced as a result of the Betrayal of Trust report. The Reportable Conduct Scheme complements the Child Safe Standards and other existing child safety measures.

CLV policy is that the **Principals** have the responsibility of reporting any allegations of 'reportable conduct' raised against employees, volunteers and school council employees who are 18 years or over to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), on behalf of CLV schools.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a sexual offence, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child, or misconduct involving any of the above

Principals should notify CCYP as soon as possible after becoming aware of a reportable allegation. If appropriate, Principals should notify the CLV Office as well. Where allegations relate to a contractor and may not require notification to the CCYP, CLV should be contacted for advice.

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Principals

Principals must still contact Victoria Police if they suspect a criminal offence involving a child has occurred. The Scheme does not change a principal's mandatory reporting or other reporting responsibilities.

School Councils

School Councils are not required to report allegations to the CCYP directly. Rather, School Councils should instruct the **Principal,** as the executive officer of the School Council, to notify CLV as soon as possible after becoming aware of reportable conduct.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the Commission can oversee and monitor the handling of allegations of child abuse and share information with relevant bodies (e.g. Working with Children Check Unit, relevant regulators and Victoria Police) to better prevent and protect children from misuse.

Reportable conduct includes allegations against an employee, volunteer, contractor, work experience or work placement student. It does not include claims made within a family context or those external to our schools.

There are five types of Reportable Conduct:

- **sexual offences** committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- **sexual misconduct** committed against, with or in the fact of a child
- **physical violence** against, with or in the presence of a child
- any behaviour that causes **significant emotional or psychological harm** to a child
- **significant neglect** of a child.[3]

Reportable Conduct includes allegations against an employee, volunteer, contractor, work experience or work placement student in the context of your School and their personal life.

- More detailed information can be found at CCYP | Resources and support for the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Any disclosure made regarding alleged Reportable Conduct must be brought to the immediate attention of the School's **Child Safe officer and the Principal.**

[3] The Commission for Children and Young People, CCYP | About the Reportable Conduct Scheme

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Requirements of Heads of Organisations

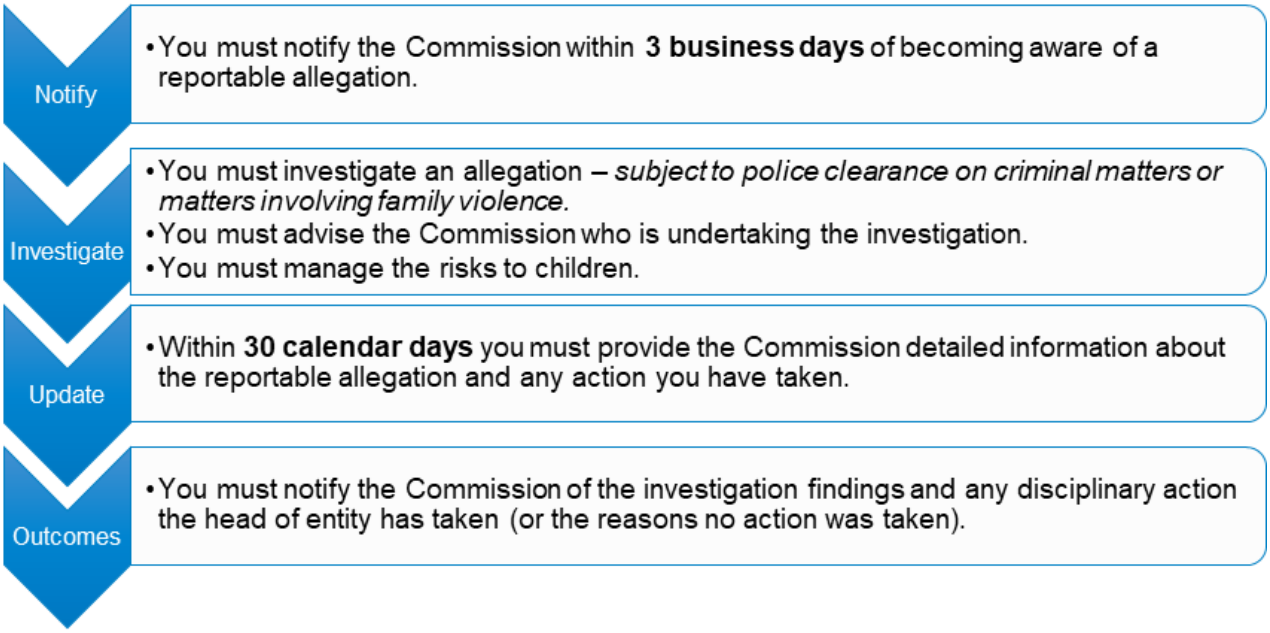
The Reportable Conduct Scheme imposes new obligations on heads of organisations **(Principals)** within the scheme.

This includes requirements to:

- have in place systems to prevent child abuse and, if child abuse is alleged, to ensure allegations can be brought to the attention of appropriate persons for investigation and response
- ensure that the Commission is notified and given updates on the organisation's response to an allegation
- report allegations that may involve criminal conduct to the police.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not replace the need to report allegations of child abuse, including criminal conduct and family violence, to Victoria Police.

A snapshot of a head of THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. obligations under reportable conduct:



Where to Get Help

Organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme should contact the Commission for clarification and guidance and to talk through any issues of concern.

1. Telephone: 8601 5281
2. Email: childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au

Further information is also available on the Commission for Children and Young People's website at: CCYP | Resources and support for the Reportable Conduct Scheme

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FAIR PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL

The safety and wellbeing of children are our primary concerns. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and evidence-based.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

Suppose an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised. In that case, we provide updates to children and families and the employee/volunteer under investigation on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

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PRIVACY POLICY

Community languages schools must exercise appropriate processes and guidelines with respect to the privacy of staff, students and parents.

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

All staff including contractors, service providers and volunteers of the department, and all CLV Schools, must comply with Victorian privacy law and this policy.

We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

CLV acknowledges that community language schools must exercise appropriate processes and guidelines which respect the privacy of all staff and students. CLV considers any breach of privacy by Schools to be a serious issue which will need to be investigated.

School Authorities should familiarise themselves with the Privacy Policy and ensure they follow the Schools' Privacy Policy when collecting, using, disclosing and managing personal and health information.

Definitions

Personal information - Personal information is recorded information or opinion, whether true or not, about a person whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information. The information or opinion can be recorded in any form. A person's name, address, phone number and date of birth (age) are all examples of personal information.

Sensitive information - Sensitive information is a type of personal information with stronger legal protections due to the risk of discrimination. It includes information or opinion about an identifiable person's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions or affiliations, religious beliefs or affiliations, philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation or practices, criminal record or membership of a trade union.

Personal and sensitive information is regulated in Victoria under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*.

Health information - Health information is information or opinion about an identifiable person's physical, mental or psychological health or disability. Health information is a type of personal information which, because of its sensitivity, also has different and stronger legal protections.

Health information is regulated in Victoria under the *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*.

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What information do schools collect?

Schools collect the following types of information:

- Information about students and their families provided by students, their families and others – for example, contact and enrolment details, health information, and parenting and access arrangements.
- Information about job applicants, staff, volunteers and visitors provided by job applicants, staff members, volunteers, visitors and others – for example, qualifications, working with children checks, teacher registration and banking details.
- Information about the activities of students, staff and families if they are on School grounds

CLV Schools provide families with a privacy collection notice (also known as a collection statement or privacy notice) on enrolment and on an annual basis to communicate:

- the reason for collecting information about families and students
- how the information is used and disclosed
- how to access, update and correct the information.

Accessing Information

All individuals, or their authorised representative(s), have a right to access, update and correct information that a School holds about them, providing access to information or records doesn't increase a risk to the safety of a child or children.

Access to Student Information

Schools only provide School reports and ordinary School communications to students, parents, carers or others who have a legal right to that information. Requests for access to other student information or by others must be made by lodging a Freedom of Information (FOI) application through the department's Freedom of Information Unit.

Storing and Securing Information

CLV Schools take reasonable steps to protect information from misuse and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification and disclosure. They store all paper and electronic records securely, consistent with the records management policy and information security standards

Records must only be disposed of with written approval of the School's principal, after the minimum retention period has been met.

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CLV Schools must have systems and processes for managing electronic and hardcopy records to ensure the authenticity, security, reliability and accessibility of these records.

All records must be stored in safe and secure locations to ensure their integrity and accessibility. Permanent records must be stored in conditions that ensure their long-term preservation.

Related Policies

- Freedom of Information
- Privacy and Information Sharing

Each School **must** have its own Privacy Policy. More information can be found here: Privacy and Information Sharing: Policy | education.vic.gov.au

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SECURITY OF INFORMATION

In order to ensure the security of information relating to staff, students and parents, community languages schools should restrict access to authorised users in line with agreed protocols and limit to the minimum level necessary for each user as follows:

Computer security:

- Using access passwords.
- Deletion of files held on hard drives, where appropriate.

Paper record security:

- Keeping staff/student/School files in locked storage when not in use.
- Disposing of waste paper containing staff/student information by shredding.
- If possible, do not leave personal information in an unattended car. If staff/student/School information is carried in a car, it should be locked in the boot so that it cannot be seen or easily accessed by an unauthorised person.

Staff/student/parent/school information sent by post or courier is secured by:

- Using registered mail so that delivery acceptance is recorded.
- Sealing envelopes and marking them, “Confidential: Attention X”.

In the case of demonstrations or case studies, individuals must:

- take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others;
- cooperate with their employer in ensuring that the workplace is safe and healthy and report to their employer any situation that could constitute a hazard;
- follow the instructions and training provided by their employers;
- not interfere with anything set up in the interests of health and safety.

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RECORD KEEPING AND STORAGE

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. will keep confidential records of any child safety concerns or complaints should they arise.

Notes and observations should be clear, easy to read and accessible.

Documentation should include dates, times and location, as well as details of conversations with other employees, volunteers, contractors or the child and their family/carers.

Reports should be accurate and impartial.

Detailed descriptions of the incident or concern, evidence and actions taken, including incident forms, reports made to authorities and any other follow-up actions, will be completed.

Following current best practice guidelines THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. will keep these records for up to 45 years (at minimum).

All information collected by THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC.

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RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

We take all reasonable steps to employ safe and skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements demonstrating our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our School understands that we have ethical and legislative obligations when recruiting staff and volunteers.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

Recruitment Process

Community languages schools should follow the procedures below when recruiting staff:

1. Clarify the need for and role of the staff member and develop or review the Job Description:
    - Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions advertised include the standard ***Child Safe Environments*** Clause 13 of Ministerial Order 1359 (as in Standard 9 of the Child Safe Standards) as provided in this **Recruitment Process for Staff** guide.
2. Identify roles to be involved in the shortlisting and interviewing.
3. Advertise the position.
4. Send applicants a copy of the position description.
5. Shortlist applicants based on their skills and experience.
6. Conduct interviews and include child safeguarding questions.
7. Select the most suitable applicant. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the School must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
    - Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
    - Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
    - The person's history of work involving children; and
    - 2-3 references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
8. Conduct 2-3 verbal professional reference checks for the applicant. Follow up with referee reports as they are a critical part of the assessment of the relative merits of each short-listed applicant.
9. Advise the successful applicant in writing including the probation period.
10. Sign an *Agreement of Engagement* and *Child Safety Commitment*.
11. Write letters to unsuccessful applicants.

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12. Orientate the new staff member. New staff must have 3 hours mandatory child safety training.
13. All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record-keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
14. Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Staff must be selected against the key selection criteria outlined in the relevant position description. Community languages schools should carry out verbal reference checks before a new employee is engaged. To find the best applicant for the position, community language schools must focus on the requirements of the job rather than questions or assumptions about the applicant's circumstances or background. Community languages schools must provide information and training to all staff involved in the advertising, selection and appointment process.

VCE teachers are required to have a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration or a Permission to Teach (PTT).

Advertising Positions

Most positions in community languages Schools should be advertised in community newspapers and radio as well as other relevant avenues. Position descriptions must include the ***Child Safe Environments*** clause as provided in the **Recruitment in Schools Guide**.

Interviewing

The selection panel should draw up a list of interview questions prior to the interviews. All applicants should be asked the same questions. The questions should aim to explore the applicants' relevant skills and experience to perform the duties and include a range of behavioural and values-based questions that will help determine the person's suitability for the position and uncover any potential risks to children.

Each interview should include questions that explore the:

- Motivation to work with children
- Understanding of child abuse in organisational settings, e.g. how it occurs, prevention strategies.
- Work history, including prior positions held, responsibilities, any gaps, and reasons for leaving (especially where previous roles involved work with children).

Particular attention is paid to:

- Answers that indicate a lack of professional boundaries in relation to working with children.
- Answers that are incomplete or concerning.
- Any unusual context for the candidate to be seeking employment with children

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Interview Questions

Community language schools should develop questions about child safety in job interviews.

Plan interview questions which aim to uncover applicant's understanding of child safety and any red flags.

Below are some questions for potential candidates for a teaching position.

A. Experienced/Professionals

1. Why did you decide to become a language teacher?
2. How do you cope with stress?
3. What is your teaching philosophy?
4. How do you use technology in the classroom?
5. Describe your classroom management structure.
6. How do you feel about classroom observations and walk-throughs?
7. What impact does trauma have on student learning? How do you address this in your classroom?
8. What role do you believe diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives should play in your classroom and in the School?
9. How will you encourage parents to support their children's education?
10. What are some methods you use to check for understanding as you're teaching?
11. How do you assess students' progress?
12. What are your thoughts about grades?
13. Why do you want to teach at this school?
14. What is the greatest challenge for teachers at community language schools today?
15. How would you handle a parent challenging your teaching methods, curriculum and/or classroom management?
16. How will you meet the needs of the students in your class who are advanced or say they're bored?
17. How will you engage reluctant learners?
18. Describe a troubling student you've taught. What did you do to get through to them?
19. Tell us about a mistake you made with a student. What happened, and how did you address it?
20. What are five traits you consider necessary for a child protection officer?
21. What three words would your peers, administrators, or students use to describe you?
22. What do you feel you can contribute to our School?
23. Which component of your résumé are you most proud of and why?
24. How do you keep up to date with child protection laws?
25. What do you think is the most important thing to remember when interacting with a vulnerable child?

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B. Beginners or non-professionals

1. Why did you decide to become a language teacher?
2. How do you cope with stress?
3. What is your teaching philosophy?
4. How would you use technology in the classroom?
5. How do you feel about ongoing learning?
6. How do you feel about classroom observations and walk-throughs?
7. Are you aware of Child Safe School Policies and Child Safe Standards?
8. What role do you believe diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives should play in your classroom and in the school?
9. How will you encourage parents to support their children's education?
10. What are some methods you would use to check for understanding as you're teaching?
11. How would you assess students' progress?
12. What are your thoughts about grades?
13. Did you ever attend [INSERT LANGUAGE] School as a child?
14. Why do you want to teach at this school?
15. How would you handle a parent challenging your teaching methods, curriculum and/or classroom management?
16. How will you meet the needs of the students in your class who are advanced or say they're bored?
17. How will you engage reluctant learners?
18. How would you get through to a "troubling" student?
19. If you were accepted for the position, what would be your biggest worry or concern?
20. What three words would your peers, administrators, or students use to describe you?
21. What do you feel you can contribute to our School?
22. Which component of your résumé are you most proud of and why?
23. Where do you see yourself in 5 or 10 years?

Reference Checks

Reference checks are a critical part of the assessment of the relative merits of each short-listed applicant. Such reports allow for a rigorous checking of claims made by applicants and the gathering of evidence on work performance. Referees have directly supervised the candidate and observed their interactions with children. Staff responsible for conducting reference checks are confident and probing in their questions, e.g. asking referees whether they have ever had any concerns about the candidate's suitability to work with children. All referees should be asked the same questions and the completed template is kept with the candidate's HR file.

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Procedures When a New Staff Member is Recruited

When a new employee is appointed to a position at a community language school, the following procedures apply:

- an *Agreement of Engagement* specifying all the terms and conditions of employment is signed by the employee and the School Education Leader and a copy given to the employee;
- the employee has a copy of their job description which includes the following statement:

CLV Schools are child safe environments. Our School actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all School staff and volunteers are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the School environment, in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. Our School's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct is available on our School website.

- an employee record card is completed;
- the employee Tax Declaration Form is completed and forwarded to the Australian Tax Office;
- a page in the wages book is set up for the employee;
- the employee is given time to read the school orientation kit, and the opportunity to ask any questions;
- when practicable, a handover is arranged with the previous occupant of the position;
- the contents of this *Student Safety and Staff Welfare Manual* are explained to them.
- all staff, volunteers and committee members must undertake three hours of compulsory Child Safety training
- all staff, volunteers and committee members must sign a Code of Conduct annually to ensure they have read and understood its contents.

Conditions of Employment

The conditions of employment for community languages schools' staff are specified below:

- All employees should have a job description which specifies their roles and responsibilities. Job descriptions should be reviewed as required. Each person should be given a copy of their job description prior to their commencing employment and whenever their job description is changed. School policy regarding conditions of employment needs to be specified in the *Agreement of Employment*.
- All employees should have an *Agreement of Engagement*, which is to be signed by their employer.
- Each employee shall be given a copy of their signed *Agreement of Employment* prior to commencing employment.

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- Job descriptions and Agreements of Employment should incorporate child safe messaging.

Probationary Period

Our probation period is for 3 months. If the School Management Committee (or School Leadership) is not happy with the employee's performance their employment can be terminated during the period of the Agreement by giving at least 14 days' notice in writing. Probation periods can help Schools assess an inexperienced employee's performance and suitability for the job before confirming their permanent employment. If there are any concerns about the person working with children, Schools should seriously consider whether they want them to remain in the job and their organisation.

Staff Information

HR files must be kept of all employees. Each file should include:

- their signed *Agreement of Engagement*
- their job description
- a completed record card
- signed Code of Conduct
- copy of their WWCC
- details of any training attended
- notes on their performance
- any other relevant information.

Staff are entitled to see their file at any suitable time to be arranged with their Manager.

Staff Orientation Kit

The School Leadership at community languages Schools will maintain an Orientation Kit and give it to all new staff on recruitment. The Orientation Kit should include the following:

- School name, address, phone numbers and fax numbers;
- School philosophy and objectives;
- School organisation chart and management model;
- Staff roles, rights and responsibilities;
- Pay day and method of payment (if applicable);
- Date and frequency of staff meetings;
- Job description and *Agreement of Engagement*;
- Staff code of behaviour;
- Child Safety Policy and other important policies;
- Organisational and Administrative Manual.

Staff Supervision and Support

Supervision and support are important to ensure that staff are supported in their work and that their work is carried out effectively. All staff and volunteers should be provided

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with regular supervision. This will include an annual performance appraisal. Supervision can be formal meetings or informal chats and catch ups. All staff should contact the principal if issues arise. The Chairperson of the School Management Committee/School Education Leader (or other nominated senior staff member) is responsible for providing supervision and support. The staff member responsible for supervision and performance appraisal must have relevant skills and experience.

Performance Appraisal

CLV and community languages schools are committed to supporting their staff to improve their own efficiency and effectiveness. All staff are expected to perform their duties to the best of their ability and to show a high level of personal commitment to providing a quality, professional service at all times. Performance appraisals will be conducted annually for employees by an appointed School Leader who is his/her Manager. Performance appraisals must be based on job descriptions and agreed work plans. Performance appraisals will also be carried out for regular volunteers at Schools. All staff should be encouraged to attend relevant professional development and training provided by CLV.

The aims of the performance appraisal are:

- to allow free and confidential discussions about work between a staff member and their manager;
- to discuss the staff member's job performance, in comparison with set standards;
- to discuss any work problems and search for a solution;
- to discuss means of improving work performance including identification of training and development needs.
- to cover other areas that intersect with the workplace e.g. Child safeguarding

The Senior Staff Member conducting the performance appraisal should:

- review the job requirements so they are fully aware of them;
- review the goals and objectives or job expectations previously agreed to with the staff member (these may have been agreed to in the last performance appraisal);
- give the staff member a copy of the *Performance Appraisal Form* to complete before the appraisal session and arrange a time for the appraisal;
- review the staff member's history: skills, training, experience, past performance appraisals etc;
- use the *Performance Appraisal Form* to assess the staff member's job performance against the expectations of the position using all sources of information available to them and rate each area or duty from unacceptable to outstanding;
- note performance issues, which need to be discussed with the staff member;
- include strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for development. Provide specific examples, especially where performance is poorly rated;
- be open and honest. Try to be positive even when dealing with negative issues. Keep in mind that this is a positive meeting for the benefit of the staff member and the person conducting the appraisal;
- write up the performance appraisal;

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- include all issues covered, actions to be taken, timelines and staff member comments.

Performance Dispute Procedure

The Performance Dispute Procedure is the procedure for dealing with issues of poor performance or concerns relating to an employee. The procedure provides staff with an opportunity to improve their performance through training and trial periods.

The following is the procedure for dealing with a performance dispute not involving misconduct, which may result in suspension from duties while an investigation takes place. It should also be included in the *Agreement of Employment*.

Any performance or behavioural issues should be addressed in a timely and professional manner.

Step 1: Verbal Warning
The employee will be told as soon as possible of any complaint concerning the performance of his/her work and will be provided with an opportunity to discuss the complaint. If appropriate, the Manager will, in consultation with the employee, outline how the employee must improve his/her performance. Any assistance needed by the employee to improve his/her performance will be identified and provided where possible. A date to review the employee's performance will be set.

Step 2: First Written Warning
If at the time of review set in Step 1, the employee's performance is still unsatisfactory, there will be further discussion with the employee. This will include the employee, a representative of their choice and their Manager.

The complaint against the employee and plans for improvement will be recorded in writing and a copy given to the employee clearly stating that a lack of improvement by a given time will result in a final written warning

Step 3: Final Written Warning
If at the date set in Step 2, the employee's performance has not improved, there will be further discussion with him/her. This will include the employee, a representative of their choice and their Manager.

The complaint against the employee and plans for improvement will be recorded in writing and a copy given to the employee clearly stating that a lack of improvement by a given time will result in termination of employment.

Step 4: Termination of Employment
If the problem persists after the final written warning the employer may terminate the employment of the employee. The Manager represents the employer and has the authority to dismiss staff.

Detailed notes of above meetings must be recorded and kept with the person's HR file.

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Misconduct and Serious Misconduct

Misconduct and serious misconduct are unacceptable behaviour by a staff member or volunteer. Misconduct includes breaches of School rules and policies, which may warrant an investigation and then further action.

Serious misconduct includes breaches of School rules and policies e.g. allegations of child abuse, allegations of theft and may warrant the instant dismissal of an employee or a suspension from duties while an investigation takes place.

Community language schools are committed to preventing a person from having contact with children or young people if they pose an unacceptable risk. Following a formal investigation, a confirmed breach of the Code of Conduct or child-related policy will lead to disciplinary procedures which may involve termination of employment or contract. Serious breaches of this policy and related procedures may be reported to Police.

Examples of misconduct include:

- theft of property or funds from community languages schools;
- wilful damage of school property;
- intoxication through alcohol or other substances during working hours;
- breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- breaches of school policies;
- verbal or physical harassment of any students, staff or parents particularly in respect of race, sex or religion;
- disclosure of confidential information regarding the organisation to any other party without prior permission;
- the disclosure of information concerning the students, staff or parents of the School other than the information that is necessary to assist them and to ensure their safety;
- carrying on a personal business from School premises or using the School's resources for personal business;
- falsification of any School records for personal gain or on behalf of any other staff member; and
- failure to comply with the Staff Code of Behaviour.

Staff Exit Procedure

When an employee leaves a community language school, an exit interview or termination interview must be arranged. The exit interview should be conducted by the School Administration Leader or a member of the School Management Committee (not the employee's direct report) and provide useful feedback about the school for use in planning and evaluation. It should also include questions regarding the implementation and promotion of child safety

Preparing the employee's termination payment:

- calculate ordinary wages due or wages in lieu of notice;

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- calculate annual leave due to the date of termination. This is paid at the employee's current rate of pay;
- calculate leave loading in accordance with the employment contract;
- check if the employee is entitled to pro-rata long service leave;
- check if any allowances are owing (e.g. travel, meals);
- check if the employee owes the community language school monies;
- prepare a written statement showing the detailed calculation of all monies to be paid to the employee;
- make sure there is a letter of resignation from the employee if they resigned, or a letter of termination if they were dismissed;
- If requested, prepare a written statement of employment detailing the period of employment and type of work performed.

If appropriate, prepare a reference and make sure that property belonging to the community language school is returned, including keys, files and equipment.

The school should undertake annual appraisals and exit interviews that include child safeguarding components.

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TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Training and education are crucial to ensuring that all staff, volunteers and committee members in our organisation understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Staff, volunteers and committee members will be provided with comprehensive child safety training every two years to ensure child safety remains a high priority.

Our school culture aims for all staff, volunteers and committee members to feel confident and comfortable discussing child safety concerns. Training topics include:

- Our policies and Code of Conduct
- Definitions and examples of abuse, including child sexual abuse and grooming
- Indicators of abuse, including harm caused by other children and young people
- How to assess and minimise risks of abuse
- How to report child abuse
- Risks for children at various developmental ages and stages and supporting children to recognise abuse in age-appropriate ways
- Cumulative harm and multidimensional abuse
- Recognising and responding to diverse groups of children and young people, including LGBTQI+.
- Children's rights and perceptions of what makes an organisation child safe
- Current legislation and requirements

We also support our staff, volunteers and committee members through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; monitor and review the effectiveness of safe child practices; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Supervision can be formal meetings or informal catch-ups and check-ins.

New employees and volunteers, and committee members will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (as defined in our Child Safety Code of Conduct).

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MANAGING RISKS TO CHILDREN

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. recognises that we have a responsibility to proactively identify and reduce or remove risks to children within our care. In addition to occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child safety risks, which include threats posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock) and online environments (for example, social media contact).

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. completes annual risk assessments for each location and program.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. is committed to reviewing any severe incidents or breaches of policy and procedure to ensure that learning can be utilised to strengthen our risk management processes across the organisation.

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PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. recognises that informed and empowered children and young people aware of safe child practices are more likely to raise concerns about abuse or misconduct. While we recognise that adults are ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of children, we believe the children and young people we work with have an invaluable contribution to our programs and activities.

Our School has a culture that supports children and young people to understand what child safety means in age-appropriate ways. Children are informed about their rights and responsibilities and feel empowered to actively participate in building an organisational culture that is safe from harm.

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. wants all children and young people to feel safe and comfortable reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. is always committed to taking the opinions and concerns of children and young people seriously.

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REVIEWING THE CHILD SAFETY POLICY

This policy will be **reviewed every year** and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible, we do our best to work with all stakeholders, including local Aboriginal communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Changes to the Child Safety Policy are made based on review findings to better protect the children and young people we engage with. Children and their families, staff, volunteers, committee members and the CLV Child Safety Officer are, where relevant, informed of review findings and any modifications made.

Child Safety Policy Declaration

I have read this Child Safety Policy and understand the fundamental principles, values and behaviours at the heart of working with community language schools. I agree to abide by the Child Safety Policy at all times.

Name: _____Sukanya Olifent_____ Signature: _____

Role: _____Principal_____ Date: _____22/02/2024_____

Associated Policies and Procedures

Each School to list related policies to be read in conjunction with this document.

Some examples are listed here:

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Cyber Safety
- Privacy Policy

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APPENDIX 1: POLICY DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait 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 or older and includes employees, volunteers and associates of CLV.

Child – Under the Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order 1359 a child is under the age of 18 years, under Mandatory Reporting a child is under 17 years of age (qualified) and under the Crimes Act a child is under 16 years of age (qualified).

Child Safe – refers to an organisational environment with an open and aware culture, understands child abuse, is supported by a well-known child safety policy, promotes the empowerment and participation of children, manages child safety risks, and expects all stakeholders to report all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

Child safety – encompasses protecting all children from child abuse and neglect, intervening early where concerns arise, preventing abuse where possible, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse. Child safety includes **cultural safety** for children.

Child Protection – refers to legislation, statutory authority responsible for child protection, and all measures taken to minimise the risk of child abuse. Child protection is a core part of the broader, overarching concept of child safety.

Code of Conduct – the policy specifies behaviours expected of all employees, volunteers and directors in the organisation.

Contractor – A person or company undertaking a contract to provide materials or labour to perform a service or a job. Examples include cleaners, photographers, tradespeople, and people contracted to provide an incursion.

Cultural safety – the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It is an environment that is socially and emotionally safe and physically safe for children. It is about shared respect, meaning, knowledge and experience, learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening[4].

Culturally or linguistically diverse background (CaLD) – identification with particular cultural or linguistic affiliations under the place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of 'parents' identification on a comparable basis.

Department of Health and Human Services – the statutory authority responsible for receiving and investigating reports of child abuse.

4 Revised from *An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards* (November 2015) -State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services and *A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation* (Version 2.0 December 2015)- Commission for Children and Young People

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Disability – any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury, intellectual disability, or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Some disabilities may be obvious, while others are hidden.

Disclosure – a child, telling someone (through words, drawings or actions) that they feel unsafe or has been harmed.

Leader (or other term used) – for this document, the leader will refer to any employee or volunteer whose role means they hold lead responsibility for key organisational functions including recruitment, selection, supervision, program planning, risk management and program delivery.

Mandated Reporter – any adult who holds the following occupations - registered medical practitioners, midwives and nurses, ***registered teachers and principals***, police, people in religious ministries, out-of-home care workers, early childhood workers, youth justice workers, registered psychologists, school counsellors are mandated to report child abuse to child protection authorities or police.

Principal – for this document, the Principal will refer to any employee or volunteer whose role means they are responsible for critical organisational functions, including recruitment, selection, supervision, program planning, risk management and program delivery.

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 says that they know someone who has been used (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 lead 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 used.

Sexual Orientation – an inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people[5]

Staff – refers to any individual employed by [INSERT SCHOOL NAME]

Volunteer – an unpaid member of [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] supporting program delivery or operations.

Young Person – any person under the age of 18.

[5] Human Rights Campaign, www.hrc.org

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APPENDIX 2: STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES

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National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

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.

Australian Government

For more information, please visit
https://pmc.gov.au/child-safety
https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/

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APPENDIX 3: RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Children, Youth and Families Act (CYFA), 2005 – Governs and guides the child protection process in Victoria. Under this Act, a person can report to Child Protection Services if they have: A significant concern for a child's well-being; belief the child needs protection; or an important concern before the birth of a child about their well-being after their birth.

The Act also defines mandatory reporting and identifies relevant professions. Under the Act, a mandated reporter must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services, Child Protection if:

- they form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse; and
- the parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from the damage of that type; and
- the belief is formed while practising their position of employment.

In Victoria, the following professions are considered mandated reporters:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals, and early childhood teachers
- school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- registered medical practitioners, nurses and midwives
- police officers
- registered psychologists
- people in religious ministry
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- out-of-home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional, or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare officers, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff.

Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017 – Establishes the Victorian Children's Council and Child Safety Commissioner; establishes the principles for the well-being of children in Victoria.

Commission for Children and Young People (CYPP) – Amongst other functions, the CYPP oversees the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme (see below).

Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 – On the 1st of July 2017, the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) began administering a reportable conduct scheme in Victoria. The scheme is designed to improve oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by staff and volunteers. Under the scheme, the CCYP have the power to:

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- oversee and monitor the handling of allegations of child abuse by relevant government departments, religious and non-government organisations
- undertake independent investigations
- scrutinise and audit systems and processes for handling allegations
- monitor and report on trends
- build skills and knowledge within government departments and religious and non-government organisations to ensure they can competently handle claims of suspected child abuse.[6]

There are five types of reportable conduct identified under the scheme:

- sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child significant neglect of a child[7].

The scheme requires the head of an organisation to:

- Respond to a reportable allegation made against an employee or volunteer by ensuring that allegations are appropriately investigated
- Report allegations which may involve criminal conduct to the police
- Notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegations **within three business days** after becoming aware of the allegation
- Give the Commission for Children and Young People certain detailed information about the allegation **within 30 calendar days**
- After the investigation has concluded, give the Commission for Children and Young People certain information including a copy of the findings of the investigation

Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 – Refers to the Offence of grooming. A grooming offence is committed if the offender communicates by work or conduct with a child under the age of 16 or their carer or supervisor and intends to commit a sexual offence involving the child.The 'grooming' offence The Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014, which commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014, introduceG the offence of Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years. This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child.

Children and Health Legislation Amendment (Statement of Recognition, Aboriginal Self-Determination and Other Matters) Bill 2023 – On Tuesday 20 June 2023, *The Children and Health Legislation Amendment (Statement of Recognition, Aboriginal Self-Determination and Other Matters) Bill 2023* was passed in Parliament by the Victorian Government. The Bill introduces a Statement of Recognition and principles for all decision makers involved with Aboriginal children and their families in the child protection system.

Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, s.49c – Refers to the failure to

[6] Commission for Children and Young People, 'About the Reportable Conduct Scheme', https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/

[7] Commission for Children and Young People, 'About the Reportable Conduct Scheme', https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/

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protect children from sexual offences. The Offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the Offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk but negligently fail to do so.

Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, s.327 – Refers to the responsibility of all individuals to disclose to authorities if they reasonably believe that a child under the age of 16 has been sexually abused. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

Working with Children's Clearance (WWCC) Act 2020
The requirement to obtain a Working with Children Check where a person wants to engage in child-related work and the process to obtain the Working with Children Check is established by the *Worker Screening Act 2020* ('the Act') which came into force on 1st February 2021 and repealed the *Working with Children Act 2005*.

A Working with Children Check is an assessment of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children in Australia. As part of the process, the screening unit will look at criminal history, child protection information, and other information.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Schools and School leaders understand and comply with the legal requirements for undertaking suitability checks including Working with Children Checks for volunteers and visitors who work with children in government School Environments.

Schools must have a registry for staff, teachers, volunteers,committee members, contractors and WWC cards to make sure everyone has the current and valid card.

Schools must establish and implement school-level policies and procedures to assess and verify the suitability of volunteers and visitors who engage in child-related and child-connected work. These may exceed the requirements of the *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)* if required.

Wrong's Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 - A new statutory duty of care (The Wrong's Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017) has been created in Victoria that places a clear legal duty to take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of child abuse (sexual and physical abuse) perpetrated by organisational representatives. The new legislation means that organisations are understood to have breached their duty of care unless an organisation can prove they took all reasonable steps to prevent the abuse.

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APPENDIX 4: INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

Abuse Type	Indicators
Physical	Physical indicators of physical child abuse include (but are not limited to): • evidence of physical injury that would not likely be the result of an accident • bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, such as back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs • burns from boiling water, oil or flames or burns that show the shape of the object used to make them, such as from an iron, grill, or cigarette • fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs, especially those not consistent with the explanation offered, or the type of injury possible at the child's age of development • cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears and external genitalia • bald patches where hair has been pulled out • multiple injuries - old and new • effects of poisoning • internal injuries.
Child sexual abuse	Physical Indicators of sexual abuse may include (but are not limited to): • injury to the genital or rectal area (for example: bruising, bleeding, discharge, inflammation or infection) • injury to areas of the body, such as breasts, buttocks, or upper thighs • discomfort in urinating or defecating • presence of foreign bodies in the vagina or rectum • sexually-transmitted infections • frequent urinary tract infections. The behavioural indicators of sexual abuse may be (but are not limited to) for an infant or toddler: • self-stimulatory behaviours, such as rocking or head banging • crying excessively, or not at all • listless and immobile, or emaciated and pale • exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination. In all children, infants and toddlers: • disclosure of sexual abuse - by the child, friend, family member • drawings or descriptions of stories that are sexually explicit and not age-appropriate • persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity, such as excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults

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	● wariness or fear of a parent, carer or guardian and reluctance to go home ● unusual fear of physical contact with adults ● change in sleeping patterns, fear of the dark or nightmares and regressive behaviour, such as bed-wetting ● wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries ● unusually nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self or others ● exhibits significant delays in gross and fine motor development and coordination ● overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative ● fear of home, specific places or particular adults ● poor self-care or personal hygiene ● complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis. For more information about age appropriate sexual behaviour visit the Department of Health.
Grooming	Behavioural indicators that a child may be subject to grooming include (but are not limited to): ● developing an unusually close connection with an older person ● displaying mood changes, such as hyperactive, secretive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn, or depressed ● using street or different language, such as copying the way the new 'friend' may speak, talking about the new 'friend' who does not belong to his or her normal social circle ● possessing gifts, money and expensive items given by the 'friend' ● being excessively secretive about their use of communications technologies, including social media ● being dishonest about where they've been and whom they've been with.
Emotional child abuse	Physical indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to): ● language delay, stuttering or selectively being mute (this is when the child only speaks with certain people or in certain situations) ● delays in emotional, mental or physical development. Behavioural indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to): In an infant or toddler: ● self-stimulatory behaviours, for example, rocking, head banging

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	● crying excessively or not at all ● listless and immobile, or emancipated and pale ● exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination ● their parent or carer is unresponsive or impatient to child's cues and unreceptive to support. In all children, infants and toddlers: ● overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour ● extremely demanding, aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour or anti-social and destructive behaviour ● low tolerance or frustration ● poor self-image and low self-esteem ● unexplained mood swings, depression, self-harm ● behaviours that are not age-appropriate (for example: overly adult or overly infantile) ● exhibits significant delays in gross and fine motor development and coordination ● poor social and interpersonal skills ● violent drawings or writing ● lack of positive social contact with other children.
Neglect	Physical indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to): ● appearing consistently dirty and unwashed ● being consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions ● being at risk of injury or harm due to consistent lack of adequate supervision from parents ● being consistently hungry, tired and listless ● having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care ● having inadequate shelter and unsafe or unsanitary conditions. Behaviour indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to): In an infant or toddler: ● self-stimulatory behaviours, such as rocking or head banging ● crying excessively, or not at all ● listless and immobile, or emancipated and pale ● exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination ● inadequate attention to the safety of the home (for example, dangerous medicines left where children may have access to them) ● being left unsupervised, either at home, on the street or in a car

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	● their parent or carer is unresponsive or impatient to child's cues and unreceptive to support ● developmental delay due to lack of stimulation. In all children, infants and toddlers: ● being left with older children or persons who could not reasonably be expected to provide adequate care and protection ● gorging when food is available or inability to eat when extremely hungry ● begging for, or stealing food ● appearing withdrawn, listless, pale and weak ● aggressive behaviour, irritability ● little positive interaction with parent, carer or guardian ● indiscriminate acts of affection and excessive friendliness towards strangers ● exhibits significant delays in gross and fine motor development and coordination ● poor, irregular or non-attendance at the service (where regular attendance is expected) ● refusal or reluctance to go home ● self-destructive behaviour ● taking on an adult role of caring for parent.
Family Violence	Physical indicators of family violence may include (but are not limited to): ● speech disorders ● delays in physical development ● failure to thrive (without an organic cause) ● bruises, cuts or welts on facial areas, and other parts of the body including back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs ● any bruises or welts (old or new) in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury (such as fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth) ● internal injuries. Behavioural indicators of family violence may include (but are not limited to): In an infant or toddler: ● self-stimulatory behaviours, for example, rocking, head banging ● crying excessively or not at all ● listless and immobile, or emancipated and pale ● exhibits significant delays in gross motor development and coordination.

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	In all children, infants and toddlers: ● violent or aggressive behaviour and language ● depression and anxiety ● appearing nervous and withdrawn, including wariness of adults ● difficulty adjusting to change ● developmentally inappropriate bedwetting and sleeping disorders ● extremely demanding, attention-seeking behaviour ● participating in dangerous risk-taking behaviours to impress peers. ● overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative behaviour ● 'acting out', such as cruelty to animals. ● demonstrated fear of parents, carers or guardians, and of going home ● complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis.

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APPENDIX 5: REPORTING PROCEDURE

CLV has adopted the following procedure from the Victorian Department of Education.

This procedure must be followed in all instances of allegations or disclosures of child abuse by or in relation to a child, school staff, volunteers, visitors or other persons while connected to a school environment.

A Mandatory Reporter must report to Child protection or Victoria Police as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- A child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical and/or sexual abuse.
- The child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of the type.

A Mandatory Reporter must:

- make a report to child protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.
- make a report as soon as practicable after forming a belief.
- make a report on each occasion they form a belief.
- make a report even if the principal or equivalent does not share their belief and
- ensure that a report has been made when another mandated reporter has undertaken to make the report.

Individuals who are required to report:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals, and early childhood teachers
- school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- registered medical practitioners, nurses and midwives
- police officers
- registered psychologists
- people in religious ministry
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- out-of-home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional, or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare officers, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff.

If a child is deemed at <u>immediate risk</u>, the Mandatory Reporter should contact emergency services on ''000'.

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If a child is at **immediate risk of harm**, you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved where possible
- administering first aid
- **calling 000 for urgent medical and police assistance to** respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the service for future liaison with the police.

1. Responding internally

a) Where THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. mandatory reporters form a belief that a child has suffered abuse or is at risk of abuse, they should inform the Child Safe Officer/Principal as soon as practicable and within 24 hours of the actions they have taken or intend to take in reporting a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.A belief may be formed because a child, young person, the parents/carers or another person raises a concern with a THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. Mandatory Reporter.

b) The THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. Child Safety Officer must ensure that the Principal is advised of the child safety concern within 24 hours. Once the Principal is notified, the Child Safety Officer must provide all other levels of management that have been made aware of the incident, up to and including the CLV Child Safe Officer.

c) **Internal reporting procedures must never delay reporting child protection concerns to the DHHS and police.** Should the Child Safety Officer, Principal or other nominated delegate be unavailable, the Mandatory Reporter who has formed the belief that a child is at risk **must** make the report directly to Victoria Police or DFFH without delay, i.e. within 24 hours.

d) The Mandatory Reporter and the Child Safety Officer must ensure that concerns and actions are recorded using the **Child Safety Incident Report Form**. This incident reporting form will help you make your report to external authorities. The completed incident reporting form should be kept securely at your School and a copy sent to the **CLV Child Safe Officer.**

2. Reporting to authorities

All mandatory reporters must make a report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

The obligations of the Mandatory Reporter are to report to Child Protection and advise the Child Safe Officer/Principal of the action they have taken or intend to take in reporting a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

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It's a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances. It's recommended that mandatory reporters follow the four critical actions.

It is best practice for the person who first received the disclosure/identified the concern to make the report.

Where child safety concerns involve employees or volunteers from within the service or other alleged perpetrators, a report must be made to:

VICTORIA POLICE
All instances of suspected child abuse by a staff member, contractor or volunteer must be reported to Victoria Police.

Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) - Reportable Conduct
All instances of suspected child abuse concerning a staff member, contractor or volunteer must also be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Child Safety Officer and Principal will lead the reportable conduct process. Reports to the CCYP must be made within three days of learning of a reportable allegation or Offence.

Where child safety concerns relate to a concern about the child in their home:

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
A report to DHHS Child Protection must be made if a child is considered to be:

In need of protection from child abuse
At the risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development

Victorian DHHS Child Protection Areas
North Division 1300 664 9777
South Division 1300 655 795
East Division 1300 360 391
West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599
West Division (Metro) 1300 664 9777

After hours, weekends, and public holidays for all: 13 12 78

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must also** report suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse but still holds significant concerns for their wellbeing, you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST/Orange Door (in circumstances where the family is open to receiving support), DHHS Child PROTECTION, or Victoria Police. Child First contact details can be found here**:**
Child and family services information, referral and support teams (Child FIRST)

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3. Informing parents and carers

a) THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. will seek advice from **Victoria Police** or **DHHS Child Protection** to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:
   i) **Not to contact** the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be contacted.
   ii) **To contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible (for licensed and approved services, it is a requirement that parents/carers are notified within 24 hours if the suspected abuse occurred at the service).

4. Providing support

a) THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. will ensure that appropriate support is provided to the child of concern and relevant volunteers and employees.
b) Support and counselling must be offered to all parties involved. Support may include developing a safety plan, direct support, referral to well-being professionals, etc.
c) Schools **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include developing a Student Support Plan in consultation with well-being professionals. This is an essential part of the duty of care requirements.

5. Whistleblowing (Protected Disclosures)

Should a THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. employee or volunteer wish to make a protected disclosure, they may do so directly to the CLV Child Safe Officer 9349 2683.
THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC. will maintain a policy for ''Whistleblowing' to support school stakeholders in raising concerns about employees, volunteers and any other relevant persons.

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APPENDIX 6: STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN

Description

Schools must ensure children feel safe and comfortable reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. Organisations should have simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All personnel must be aware of ' 'children's rights and 'adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

Rationale

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. Some organisations do not have simple and accessible processes assisting children in understanding their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

How could your organisation implement this standard?

Examples of how our organisation could implement this standard include the following:

- Provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. For example, information could be included in welcome packs, information sessions, and posters, as well as on websites and social media.

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

- Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to review information and processes.

- Consider access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.

- Translate Schools information (including information about children's rights, child safety policies, statements of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages.

- Gather feedback from children, for example, through surveys, focus groups, story time and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were

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to raise concerns, and implement improvements based on this feedback.

- Enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on safe child policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. For example, views could be gathered through suggestion boxes, feedback sessions, emails or online (via wikis or other social media).

Successfully implementing this standard should result in schools in which:

- reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible to all children
- children understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation and trusted adults and external bodies (for example, the police)
- children feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- children feel empowered to contribute to the organisation's understanding and treatment of child safety
- children's reports of concern are responded to appropriately
- staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation

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APPENDIX 7: SCHOOLS OPERATING IN EARLY YEARS ENVIRONMENTS

Physical Environment

CLV schools that teach in the early years ensure legislated staffing ratios and qualification requirements are always met. They are also committed to ensuring our workforce is appropriately motivated and experienced for its critical role in enhancing children's learning and development. They achieve this by developing warm, respectful relationships with children, creating safe environments, and encouraging children's active engagement in their learning programs.

Training

THAI CENTRAL SCHOOL INC.is committed to professional development for staff regarding preschool-aged delivery in line with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).

Collection of Children

Only parents/guardians and authorised nominees can collect a child from our early learning program. We encourage all families to keep these contact details and arrangements up to date. So, we can always ensure your child's safety; photo identification will be requested from any contact unknown to our early learning staff. If a child has not been collected from the centre by closing time and we cannot contact their parent or guardian, we will contact the contacts listed on the ' 'child's enrolment form. In extreme circumstances where we cannot get one of the contacts by closing time, we will contact the necessary authorities to collect the child safely. Therefore, contact details must be kept up to date at all times.

Staffing Arrangements

At CLV schools, we ensure that legislated staffing ratios and qualification requirements are always met. We are also committed to ensuring our workforce is appropriately motivated and experienced for its critical role in enhancing children's learning and development. They achieve this by developing warm, respectful relationships with children, creating safe environments, and encouraging children's active engagement in their learning programs.

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Policy number	CLV 07	Version	5
Drafted by	Neda Erjaei	Approved by Committee on	20 December 2023
Responsible person	Neda Erjaei	Scheduled review date	20 December 2024

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