

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Ballarat Associated Schools Incorporated (BAS) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. All children participating at and involved in BAS events have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of our children and young people will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

BAS has zero tolerance for child abuse.

BAS is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety, feel empowered and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our policies, procedures, strategies and practices in relation to children and young people will be inclusive to the needs of all students including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, students who are vulnerable, LGBTQI+ students and international students.

Every person involved with BAS has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

It is the responsibility of all member schools to ensure they are compliant with Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises, and further that they have implemented robust policies and procedures for their workers, students and the broader community.

In its planning, decision-making and operations BAS will:

- 1. Provide children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences and take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;*
- 2. Value and empower children and young people to participate in decisions which affect their lives;*
- 3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children and young people;*
- 4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping the safety of all children and young people paramount;*
- 5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children and young people;*
- 6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;*
- 7. Ensure children and young people know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe,*

8. *and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;*
9. *Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;*
10. *Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk;*
11. *Value the input of and communicate honestly and openly with families and carers. The views of staff, contractors, officials, children, young people and families are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner; and*
12. *Systematically and continually identify and assess risks to child safety and will eliminate, where possible, or reduce all potential sources of harm.*

Adapted from Our Community (2016) *Child Protection Toolkit: The Department of Education and Training*