

# Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures

## Aim

Casey Grammar School has developed this Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures to provide a framework for how the School can enable and empower students to understand their rights and to participate in all the different decisions that affect them. It forms part of the School's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the School's culture with respect to child safety.

The School's Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures have been approved and endorsed by the School's Board and is regularly reviewed by the Board.

## Objectives

Casey Grammar School places a high priority on promoting the empowerment of our students and their participation in all decisions that affect them, not just those relating to child safety and wellbeing.

Establishing an environment of trust and inclusion at the School enables students to speak up if they have concerns.

Casey Grammar School recognises that students may not disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the School because they:

- do not recognise behaviours as inappropriate, abusive or grooming behaviour; or
- do not know how to raise their concerns or make a complaint.

Having simple and accessible information for students about inappropriate behaviours and about the School's reporting and responding processes assists all students to develop the appropriate knowledge and skills to identify and communicate when they do not feel safe.

This Policy and its Procedures set out the policies, procedures, strategies and practices that the School uses to encourage the participation and empowerment of all students, to establish a child-friendly culture in which students are respected and taken seriously, to promote friendship and encourage peer support, and to provide opportunities for students to participate in decisions that affect them and to respond to their contributions.

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Casey Grammar School is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

At Casey Grammar School we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child safety laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

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## Principles

The following three key principles underpin the School's approach to participation of students in decisions at or by the School that affect them:

- Empowerment: which involves students having greater control or say over their lives through participation.
- Purposeful Engagement: which involves students taking on valued roles, addressing issues that are relevant to them, and influencing real outcomes.
- Inclusiveness: which involves ensuring that all students are able to participate.

## Scope

This Policy and its Procedures apply to all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors (together referred to as "Staff" or "staff members" for the purposes of this Policy and its Procedures).

They apply in all School environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas).

## Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in this Policy and its Procedures can be found in Child Safeguarding Program Definitions.

Of particular importance to this Policy and its Procedures are the following additional key definitions:

Term	Definition
<b>Decisions that affect students</b>	Of particular relevance to this Policy and its Procedures is the requirement that students are able to participate in decisions that affect them. <b>"Decisions that affect students"</b> are not limited to those relating to child safety and wellbeing. They include decisions about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• organisational planning</li><li>• delivery of services</li><li>• management of facilities</li><li>• learning and assessment environments</li></ul>
<b>Wellbeing Program</b>	The wellbeing program is provided to students to assist in their development as a person. It relates to the total care of students and involves tending to both the academic and non-academic needs of students, including their spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing.
<b>Resilience</b>	Resilience is the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity.

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## Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to relevant roles and responsibilities as set out in Child Safeguarding Responsibilities, the following people have particular responsibilities under this Policy and its Procedures.

Role	Responsibility
Principal	The Principal is responsible for implementing this policy and procedure.
Deputy Principal – Wellbeing	The Deputy Principal – Wellbeing is responsible for managing the involvement of students in school decisions and policy development and reviews.
Head of School	The Heads of School are responsible for managing child and wellbeing curriculum.

## Casey Grammar School's Policy

### 1. Participation

As part of creating and maintaining a child safe environment at the School for all students, the School ensures that all students:

- are engaged and involved in decisions that affect them
- can express their views and raise concerns
- have their views and opinions taken seriously
- are educated about their rights
- are included in policy consultation and development.

The School provides multiple age-appropriate platforms, set out in the Procedures below, to regularly seek students' views about, and to enable students to participate in, decisions that affect them.

The School actively seeks to understand what makes students feel safe in our organisation. We encourage students to provide feedback about child safety concerns and issues at the School, and implement strategies, set out in the Procedures below, to obtain feedback from its students.

The School takes all student contributions seriously, and documents and actively looks for ways to implement improvements to its child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices that reflect these contributions.

The School is honest with students about the extent of their involvement in decision-making and gives feedback on how their views have been taken into account and if, and if so how, they have been actioned.

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## 2. Developing and Maintaining a Child Friendly Culture

The School is a child safe and child-centred organisation. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive and social environment, where students feel nurtured as they learn.

The School's physical environments promote students' feelings of inclusion, participation and empowerment.

The School recognises the importance of friendships and peer support in helping students feel safe and be less isolated. We actively support students to develop and sustain friendships and to receive support from peers through both formal programs and informal mechanisms, set out in the Procedures below.

The School is committed to ensuring that the information and procedures that we have to enable students to raise, and to respond to, child safety concerns are age-appropriate, simple, and accessible for all students, including students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability, LGBTIQ+ students and other vulnerable students. For more information, refer to Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures.

The School openly displays contact details for independent child advocacy and child helpline services throughout the School.

The School provides training and information to Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, about identifying signs of child abuse and other harm, and about how to help and encourage students to participate in decisions and to raise concerns. For more information, refer to Child Safeguarding Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures.

The School takes a leadership role in raising community awareness of children's rights, child abuse and other harm and its prevention including by:

- actively promoting and participating in civic engagement activities and campaigns which promote whole of community awareness of children's rights, child abuse and other harm, and prevention
- encouraging students at the School to become involved in these activities and campaigns.

## 3. Behavioural Expectations

Standards of Behaviour for Students Attending the School:

The School:

- has a Student Code of Conduct, developed in consultation with students, that sets out standards of behaviour for all students attending the School, including behaviours relating to child safeguarding. The School promotes the Student Code of Conduct within the School
- has policies on Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Social Media – Student Usage and Harassment (Student Against Student). For more information, refer to our Student Duty of Care Program

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- disciplines students who do not uphold these standards of behaviour using our student disciplinary procedures, but also supports these students to address and mitigate behaviours that are not in line with the Code and any underlying factors
- encourages students to tell a trusted adult, whether it's a parent/carer or other family member, a trusted teacher or a Child Safety Officer, when they feel unsafe as a result of or are otherwise impacted by the behaviour of other students.

## 4. Child Safety and Wellbeing Curriculum

The School delivers age-appropriate information and education to all students about:

- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- child abuse awareness and the right to be safe
- children and young people's rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy
- how they can raise concerns about abuse
- resilience and coping with adversity
- the School's response to child safety incidents and concerns, including that any concerns students raise will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately
- our Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures, Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting Obligations) Policy and Procedures, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct.

## Procedures

### 1. Participation

The School implements its Child Safety Policies and Procedures to ensure it meets the goals for student participation and empowerment.

To encourage and enable students to participate in decisions that affect them, the School uses the following platforms and methods:

- House Groups
- Wellbeing Programs
- Classroom Discussion
- Record Books/Student Planner
- Student Groups and Committees (including SRC, Year 6 and Year 12 Leaders Committee)

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To encourage and enable students to provide feedback specifically about safety and wellbeing concerns and issues, including when reviewing our child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices, the School employs a number of strategies, including:

- Student Surveys

### **2. Developing and Maintaining a Child Friendly Culture**

The formal programs used at the School to support students to develop and sustain friendships and receive support from peers include:

- House System
- Student Leaders Meeting
- Home Groups

The School has, and provides to all students, age-appropriate information through the curriculum to ensure their understanding of the contents of our child safeguarding policies and procedures.

### **3. Wellbeing Programs**

The teaching of healthy and respectful relationships, including sexuality, and skills relating to resilience assists students to grow and develop into healthy, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential.

Healthy and respectful relationships, sexuality and resilience education at the School is engrained in the School's curriculum delivery, including:

- Wellbeing Lessons
- Health and PE Classes
- Grade 5 Sexual Education Program
- Respectful Relationships Classes

### **4. Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention**

The School's curriculum includes age-appropriate education for students on child safety awareness and child abuse and harm prevention, to build their capacity to:

- Identify when they feel safe and unsafe and when they are at risk, including when online
- identify safe and unsafe touching (using the anatomical names for their body parts)
- promote their personal safety (avoiding harm where possible)
- seek help, using their identified safety networks
- overcome barriers to disclosure, for example guilt or disbelief.

The School considers best practice when providing access to or selecting providers of child abuse and harm prevention education.

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## 5. Child Safeguarding Information and Communication

To ensure that students can identify inappropriate behaviour and know how to raise concerns, the School provides age appropriate information about the above topics, as well as other child safety and wellbeing topics, through various age-appropriate pastoral care initiatives and other communication methods.

### Implementation

This Policy and its Procedures are made available to all Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors, via the School's intranet. They are included in induction training and in ongoing refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors. For more information, refer to **Child Safeguarding Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures**.

They are made available to parents/carers, students and the wider School community in summary in our **Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures**.

It is also available in hard copy by request.

### Breach of Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures

Casey Grammar School enforces this Policy and its Procedures. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.
- For more information, refer to Compliance and Breach (Child Safeguarding) Policy and Procedures.

### Policy Review

A review of the Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding) is conducted every **2 years** or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy.

### Source of Obligation

Casey Grammar School Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures implements:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standard 3

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- Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 7

## CSV Ltd and Casey Grammar School Policy and Procedure Linkages

The Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures is to be read and understood in conjunction with:

- Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures
- Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding)
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding)
- Students with Disability Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding)
- LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy
- **Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures**
- **Child Safeguarding Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures**
- **Compliance and Breach (Child Safeguarding) Policy and Procedures.**

## References and Resources

Victorian Commission for Children and Young People, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian and the University of South Australia's Australian Centre for Child Protection, [Participation and Empowerment: A guide for organisations working with children and young people](#), 2021

## Policy Administration

<b>Status</b>	Approved by the Board on 8 February, 2023
<b>Person Responsible</b>	The Principal
<b>Approver(s)</b>	The CSV Board is responsible for ensuring that the policy and its procedures are reviewed and updated as needed, and for approving this policy
<b>Approval Date</b>	8 February 2023
<b>Version Number</b>	1.0
<b>Version History</b>	Created 2022



# Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures

<b>Review Frequency</b>	A review of this policy and its procedures is conducted at least every 2 years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation
<b>Next Review Date</b>	January 2023
<b>Risk Rating</b>	High
<b>Location</b>	CompliSpace

