

CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Relevant to:	All staff, volunteers, contractors, students, parents/carers, and visitors in any school-related context.
Developed by:	Management Team
Date of Introduction:	July 2025 – draft
Date of Most Recent Review:	June 2026
Date for Review:	June 2028
Approved:	NTSA Board Jun26
Related Documents:	Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure; Anti-Bullying and Discrimination Policy; Code of Conduct for Employees; Parent Code of Conduct; Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy; Pastoral Care Policy and Procedure; Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure; TVSS Student Issue Resolution Process; Critical Incident Policy; Gender and Inclusivity Policy (draft)

PURPOSE

Tamar Valley Steiner School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, respectful and nurturing environment where all children and young people are protected from abuse, harm, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, grooming, bullying and violence.

This Child and Youth Safe Policy is the School's overarching safeguarding framework. It establishes the principles, responsibilities, systems and practices that guide how child safety and wellbeing are embedded across governance, leadership, culture, recruitment, education, pastoral care, community engagement and organisational decision-making. It integrates the school's approach to Child Safety with the Steiner educational approach, which honours the developmental stages and individuality of each child and young person, ensuring that child safety is approached holistically, respectfully, and in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Our Commitment

Tamar Valley Steiner School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and young people.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Child safety is embedded into governance, leadership, culture and daily practice. We have a culture of transparency, accountability and shared responsibility

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of vulnerable students including Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child or young person's safety.

We respond effectively to concerns, disclosures and allegations with support for students and families in these processes.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

The School Board, Principal, and Leadership Team are responsible for establishing and maintaining a strong child safeguarding culture.

The School will:

- Maintain child safety as a standing governance and leadership priority.
- Receive regular reports regarding child safety risks, incidents, complaints, training completion, and compliance obligations.
- Conduct periodic safeguarding reviews and risk assessments.
- Promote a culture where concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.
- Ensure child safety considerations inform all major organisational decisions.
- Foster a culture of professional accountability in which all adults understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Child safety performance indicators (see Appendix 1) will be monitored and reviewed as part of the School's continuous improvement processes as part of the school's strategic planning process.

2. Including and empowering children and young people

2.1 Understanding rights and safety concerns

Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. The whole school curriculum supports students to develop the skills and confidence to recognize unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.

2.2 Developmentally Appropriate Empowerment in a Steiner Context

We uphold the principle that all children and young people can and should be empowered to understand their rights, but must do so in ways that are developmentally appropriate and in harmony with Steiner pedagogy:

Early Childhood (Kindergarten – Class 2)

- Safety concepts are explored through story, rhythm, and imaginative play.
- Teachers model respectful, trusting relationships.
- Children learn to identify safe feelings and trusted adults.

Middle Childhood (Class 3 – Class 5)

- Introduction of clear concepts like personal boundaries, consent, and emotional literacy.
- Safety circles, storytelling, and class discussions are used to reinforce safety language.

Upper Primary and Adolescence (Class 6 through to Class 10)

- Open discussions on power, consent, peer relationships, and digital safety.
- Students are involved in shaping respectful relationship education content.
- Protective behaviours curriculum is delivered in alignment with the Health & Personal Development learning area of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework.

2.3 Student feedback and concerns

Students are informed about and encouraged to provide feedback using our student feedback and complaint process. Staff ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and they are encouraged to share concerns with a trusted adult.

Students were consulted in the development of many pathways to disclose concerns to trusted adults in the school. Pathways include: Posting a letter to the Wellbeing Box; Informing a trusted educator that works with them in their classroom; informing the Student Wellbeing Officer; Informing the Principal; informing the Student Support and Administration team.

Their concerns will be taken seriously and they will be supported.

2.4 Peer-to-peer safety

Positive relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging which is embedded in our expectations of student conduct, and behaviour management processes for managing peer-to-peer challenges.

2.5 Child/young person-inclusive and supportive complaint procedures

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child or young person, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

3. Family engagement

The School involves and communicates with children, young people and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children, young people and their parents/carers (such as school notices, annual reinduction to our policies, handbooks and policies) about:

- the School's commitment to safeguarding children and young people, and their rights;
- the behaviour expected of our staff and of the School community; and
- the Safeguarding Children and Young People policies and procedures.

The School has processes including parent-teacher communication, and our Feedback and Complaints procedures, for encouraging two-way communication with children and young people,

and families, which are designed to actively request, collate and address feedback, facilitating effective communication and involvement.

4. People working with children and young people are suitable, supported and monitored

The School is committed to rigorous recruitment, screening, induction, supervision, and performance management processes to ensure that people working with children and young people demonstrate child safe values and behaviours.

4.1 Safer Recruitment

The School:

- Applies child-safe recruitment practices for all positions involving contact with children and young people.
- Clearly communicate child safety responsibilities in advertisements, position descriptions, employment contracts, and role statements.
- Conduct behavioural interviews that assess attitudes towards child safety and professional boundaries.
- Verify identity, qualifications, registrations, and employment history.
- Obtain and document referee checks that specifically address child safety concerns and suitability to work with children and young people.
- Investigate unexplained gaps in employment history.
- Require current Working with Vulnerable People registration before commencement of duties.
- Ensure contractors and external providers meet equivalent child safety requirements.

4.2 Induction

All staff, volunteers and contractors will receive child safety induction before commencing duties, including:

- Child Safe Standards and National Principles.
- Code of Conduct requirements.
- Professional boundaries.
- Mandatory reporting obligations.
- Reportable conduct obligations.
- Complaint handling processes.
- Online safety expectations.
- School safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Ongoing Monitoring and Supervision

Child safety suitability is an ongoing responsibility and not limited to recruitment.

The School will:

- Provide regular supervision and professional support.
- Monitor compliance with child safety expectations.
- Address concerns regarding professional conduct promptly.
- Require staff participate in annual child safety training.
- Review safeguarding knowledge and practice through performance and development processes.
- Take immediate action where concerns arise regarding the safety or wellbeing of children or a young person.

Any behaviour inconsistent with child safety expectations will be addressed through the School's disciplinary procedures and reported to relevant authorities.

4.4 Prevention of Offender Movement Between Organisations

To reduce the risk of individuals who pose a risk to children and young people moving between educational settings undetected, the School will:

- Provide accurate, objective and lawful employment references.
- Not enter into agreements that suppress legitimate safeguarding concerns.
- Comply with mandatory reporting obligations and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Share relevant safeguarding information where legally permitted and necessary to protect children and young people.
- Participate in sector-based safeguarding initiatives that strengthen child safety across educational settings.
- Maintain clear records of child safety concerns, investigations, findings and actions taken.

5. Staff and volunteers keep children and young people safe

All staff undertake annual training in child safety, trauma-informed practice, and the reporting process. Teachers receive additional training in age-appropriate delivery of safety education aligned with Steiner pedagogy.

5.1 Professional Boundaries and Code of Conduct

All adults engaged by the School are required to maintain clear professional boundaries with children and young people.

Staff, volunteers and contractors must:

- Act as positive role models.
- Avoid favouritism or special relationships.
- Use only approved communication channels.
- Maintain appropriate physical contact practices.
- Respect privacy and dignity.
- Avoid situations involving unnecessary one-to-one isolation with students.
- Report any boundary concerns involving themselves or others.

The School recognises that breaches of professional boundaries may be indicators of grooming behaviour and will respond accordingly.

6. Safe Physical and online environments

The School is committed to creating environments that promote safety and wellbeing.

The School will:

- Conduct regular safeguarding risk assessments.
- Monitor physical environments for child safety risks.
- Maintain appropriate supervision arrangements.
- Implement online safety measures.
- Promote respectful and safe digital behaviour.
- Establish clear expectations regarding social media and electronic communication.
- Ensure educational technologies support child safety.

Child safety risks associated with excursions, camps, events and external providers will be assessed and managed according to risk assessments and consideration of suitability of child safe practices, people and environments.

7. Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child and young person has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children and young people unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

[REFER TO PASTORAL CARE OR STUDENT WELLBEING POLICY]

8. Complaints and reporting

Clear procedures exist for managing disclosures, suspicions, and complaints.

The school fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Feedback and Complaint Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers must follow the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy. For school leaders, this includes responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

9. Information Sharing and Record Keeping

Accurate and secure record keeping is essential to child safeguarding.

The School will:

- Maintain confidential records of disclosures, concerns, complaints, investigations and actions taken.
- Ensure safeguarding records are securely stored and accessible only to authorised personnel.
- Retain records in accordance with legal requirements.
- Share information with relevant authorities and organisations where authorised or required by law and where necessary to protect children and young people.
- Ensure patterns of concerning behaviour are identified and monitored over time.

The School recognises that effective information sharing is critical in preventing harm and reducing opportunities for offenders to move between organisations undetected.

10. Safeguarding children and young people policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures support this framework:

- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedures
- TVSS Student Feedback and Resolution Process
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure
- Anti-Bullying and Discrimination Policy

- Pastoral Care Policy and Procedure

All policies are available to families on the school's website and are regularly updated.

11. Continuous Improvement

The School will undertake regular evaluation of its child safeguarding framework through:

- Annual Child Safe Standards self-assessments.
- Policy reviews.
- Analysis of complaints and incidents.
- Feedback from children and young people, families and staff.
- Safeguarding audits and risk assessments.
- Review of emerging research, legislation and sector guidance.

Lessons learned from incidents, complaints, reviews and sector-wide inquiries will inform ongoing improvements to safeguarding practices.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Every 2 years;
- Following any significant safeguarding incident;
- Following legislative or regulatory change; or
- Where improvements are identified through audits, reviews or feedback.

Children, young people, families, staff and governing body representatives' perspectives will be sought and included during review processes.

13. Final Statement

At Tamar Valley Steiner School, safeguarding children is central to our purpose. We embrace the wisdom of Steiner pedagogy while holding firm to the standards required for a child safe organisation. We believe every child and young person deserves to flourish in an environment free from harm, filled with wonder, and guided by love and responsibility.

APPENDIX 1: Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Child Safe Performance Indicators

The following are examples of indicators that may be adopted to monitor the school's performance in Child Safety. The exact measures to be implemented, and timing and who completes any audit process will be determined annually by the Board.

Area	Performance Indicator	Target
Governance	Child safety is a standing agenda item at Board meetings.	100% of scheduled Board meetings
Training	Staff, Board members, volunteers and contractors complete required child safety induction before commencing duties.	100%
Annual Professional Learning	Staff complete annual child safety refresher training, including mandatory reporting and professional boundaries.	100%
Recruitment	Recruitment files demonstrate compliance with child-safe recruitment requirements (WWVP registration, referee checks, verification, employment history, behavioural interview questions).	100% of audited files
Working with Vulnerable People	All relevant personnel maintain current registration throughout their engagement.	100% compliance
Student Education	Age-appropriate child safety, protective behaviours and respectful relationships education is delivered across all year levels.	Annually in every class
Student Voice	Students know how to report concerns and identify trusted adults, as measured through surveys or wellbeing activities.	≥90% positive response
Family Engagement	Families receive annual information about the School's child safety framework and reporting pathways.	100% of enrolled families
Reporting Culture	All child safety concerns, disclosures and complaints are recorded and managed in accordance with School procedures.	100% compliance
Response Time	Child safety concerns are acknowledged and actioned promptly in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.	100% within required timeframes
Risk Management	Child safety risk assessments are completed for camps, excursions, visiting providers and significant activities.	100%

Online Safety	Digital safety controls, monitoring and supervision processes are reviewed annually.	Annual review completed
Record Keeping	Safeguarding records are complete, confidential and maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.	Annual audit demonstrates compliance
Safeguarding Audits	Annual self-assessment against the Child Safe Standards is completed and improvement actions documented.	Completed annually
Complaints & Incidents	Trends in complaints, incidents and near misses are analysed and reported to leadership and the Board.	Annual analysis completed
Continuous Improvement	Recommendations arising from audits, incidents, complaints or legislative changes are implemented.	≥90% completed within agreed timeframe
Policy Review	Policy reviewed following scheduled review dates or significant legislative or organisational change.	100% compliance