

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



BRISBANE GIRLS
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

1 Purpose

Brisbane Girls Grammar School (the **School**) is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly school, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (the **Policy**) provides an overview of the School's approach to implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in accordance with the *Child Safe Organisations Act*.

The Policy informs the School community of everybody's obligation to act ethically towards children and guides their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children. The Policy provides guidance on the processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of the School.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to all members of the School community, including staff (full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term and casual employees) as well as contractors, volunteers, and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at the School, irrespective of whether they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to all members of the Board of Trustees.

The Policy applies in all physical, virtual and online School environments used by students during and outside of School hours, including other locations provided by the School for a student's use (e.g. Marrapatta Outdoor Education campus, Rangakarra sports grounds) and those provided through third-party providers.

The Policy should be read together with the other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and codes outlined in the Related School Policies section below.

3 Statement of commitment to child safety

Brisbane Girls Grammar School is a Child Safe Organisation committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students enrolled at the School. The welfare and best interests of students are paramount, and protecting students from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to the ethos of the School. The School will not tolerate conduct that exposes students to harm and is committed to providing environments where children and young people are physically, socially, emotionally and culturally safe and feel safe.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Staff training and community awareness processes emphasise that every person involved in the School has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Students' participation and inclusion is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. The child safety and wellbeing policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the diverse cultural backgrounds and needs of all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The School promotes positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect. The School has zero tolerance for child abuse or other harm and all staff are responsible for the care and protection of students, and to report information about suspected abuse or harm. The School takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in the School environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, these are treated seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

The School is committed to the safety and inclusion of all children, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds, children with disability, LGBTQIA+ children, and children who may be experiencing vulnerability. The School is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and to providing an environment where their identities, cultures, and connections to Country are respected and upheld.

The School is committed to regularly reviewing the child safe practices, and seeking input from students, families, staff and volunteers to inform ongoing strategies.

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees retains ultimate responsibility for child safety within the School and has the responsibility for the regular review and monitoring of the School's *Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy* to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice. Board of Trustee members will champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader School community and undertake annual training on child safety.

The Board will receive regular reports on child safety matters, including risks, incidents, complaints and compliance with the Child Safe Standards and the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*.

4.2 The Principal (or authorised delegate)

The Principal (or authorised delegate) is responsible for:

- (a) the regular review and monitoring of this Policy
- (b) implementing child safety policies, procedures and practices
- (c) ensuring all staff are regularly trained in the application of this Policy, and
- (d) maintaining a culture of constant vigilance and awareness of this Policy throughout the School.

4.3 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained and that policies and practices are in place and followed.

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team will:

- (a) model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing.
- (b) enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- (c) reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- (d) promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the School community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and Board of Trustee meetings
- (e) facilitate regular professional learning for staff, contractors and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of abuse and responding to abuse
- (f) create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse and other harm to relevant authorities.

4.4 School staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- (a) participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training as is relevant, provided by the School, and other providers, and always follow the School's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- (b) act in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct
- (c) identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with the *Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy*
- (d) actively demonstrate an awareness of child safety protocols and procedures, and ensure these are embedded in all aspects of School-based activities and interactions with students and their families across the School
- (e) ensure students' views and diverse cultural backgrounds, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- (f) implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs and cultural backgrounds of all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

5 Staff Code of Conduct

The *Staff Code of Conduct* sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in the physical, virtual and online environments of the School.

The School ensures that students understand what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, so they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the School environment.

The *Staff Code of Conduct* includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

6 Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

Brisbane Girls Grammar School identifies, assesses and manages risk to child safety and wellbeing within the physical and online School environment. These risks are managed through the child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in specific risk registers, such as those developed for the Outdoor Education Program.

The Board of Trustee members and Senior Leadership Team are responsible to review and evaluate the potential and actual risks to child safety in the School on a regular basis and ensure that identified risks are satisfactorily addressed.

The School is committed to ensuring the relevant policies and procedures are implemented to address risk in the physical and online environments.

7 Establishing a culturally safe environment

Brisbane Girls Grammar School is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment for every student and respects the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices. The School identifies, challenges, and does not tolerate racism.

Every student at Brisbane Girls Grammar School is entitled to have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the School recognises the link between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, identity and safety, and endeavours to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families, and their communities to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities. The School solicits feedback from students and staff through Reconciliation surveys to evaluate progress and guide continuous initiatives aimed at fostering inclusivity and respect within the School community.

The School actively fosters cultural safety through a range of meaningful initiatives. The *Reconciliation Action Plan* reflects the School's commitment to establishing an inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

8 Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing, Brisbane Girls Grammar School works to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to the child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

The School actively promotes positive and respectful relationships within the School community. It recognises that a sense of connectedness among students and between students and the adult members of the School community is a vital component of adolescent growth. Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and strong friendships and peer support is encouraged in the School to ensure a sense of belonging through the *Promoting Positive Relationships Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct*, induction and orientation programs, House structure, Ethics program, buddy programs, Outdoor Education Program, co-curricular programs and the Student Wellbeing Framework.

Students are informed of their rights through the Student Care programs. Students are provided with the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. Students are provided with information about who they should talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and they are encouraged to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can access information on how to report concerns at

Student Reception, the Floreamus Centre, or via the Minerva Respectful Relationships tile, the *Promoting Positive Relationships Policy*, the *Child Protection Policy and Risk Management Strategy*, and the *Complaints Policy*.

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

9 Family engagement

Families and the School community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, Brisbane Girls Grammar School is committed to providing families and the community with accessible information about the School's child safe policies and practices, and to involving them in the School's approach to child safety and wellbeing.

The School creates opportunities for families to contribute to the development and review of child safety policies and practices and encourages them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

This will be done by:

- (a) The School will seek input from families and the community through surveys, Parents and Friends Association, and via student, staff, and parent meetings
- (b) All child safety policies and procedures will be made available for students and parents on Minerva.
- (c) BGGGS News and Minerva Daily Notices will be used to inform families and the School community about any significant updates to the child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives introduced to ensure student safety
- (d) Child Safety posters will be displayed across the School and at Student Reception, as well as on Minerva.

10 Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, Brisbane Girls Grammar School celebrates the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promotes respectful environments that are free from discrimination. The School's focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

The School recognises that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw upon. The School pays particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring the child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- (a) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- (b) children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- (c) children and young people with disabilities
- (d) children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- (e) children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

The *Disability Policy* provides more information about the measures the School has in place to support diversity and equity.

11 Staff, contractors and volunteers

Brisbane Girls Grammar School applies robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers (excluding parent volunteers) are suitable to work with children.

11.1 Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, the School follows the:

- (a) Recruitment and Selection Policy
- (b) Blue Card Policy (Working with Children Check)
- (c) Contractor Management Policy (if applicable)

When engaging staff to perform child-related activities, the School:

- (d) verify and link the person's Working with Children Check (Blue Card) or relevant professional registration, such as a Queensland Teacher's Registration or Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) Registration
- (e) collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the role and working with children (if applicable).

11.2 Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in an induction program with a focus on:

- (a) the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- (b) the Staff Code of Conduct
- (c) any other child safety and wellbeing information that School leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role
- (d) the Child Protection Policy and Risk Management Strategy
- (e) the completion of the Child Protection training module.

11.3 Contractor engagement

All contractors must have a valid and current Blue Card. All contractors will be expected to participate in an induction program with a focus on

- (a) the Contractor Management Policy
- (b) the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- (c) the Staff Code of Conduct
- (d) the Child Protection Policy and Risk Management Strategy.

11.4 Volunteer Engagement

All volunteers must have a valid and current Blue Card. All volunteers will be expected to participate in an induction program with a focus on:

- (a) the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- (b) the Staff Code of Conduct
- (c) any other child safety and wellbeing information that School leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role
- (d) the Child Protection Policy and Risk Management Strategy
- (e) the completion of the Child Protection training module/presentation

11.5 Parent Engagement

All parent volunteers must have a current and valid Blue Card. All parent volunteers will be expected to participate in an induction program with a focus on:

- (a) the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- (b) the Staff Code of Conduct
- (c) any other child safety and wellbeing information that School leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role
- (d) the Child Protection Policy and Risk Management Strategy

11.6 Ongoing supervision and management of staff, contractors and volunteers (excluding parent volunteers)

All staff, contractors and volunteers (excluding parent volunteers) engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff, contractors and volunteers will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-related work. This will be done through annual observation and performance appraisal process (where applicable), reviewing and continuing volunteer or contractor agreements, as well as responding to all student, parent or colleague concerns with investigations and appropriate action.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with School policies and legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

12 Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually via an online module annually or reviewing the process in a staff meeting, and will include guidance on:

- (a) the School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- (b) recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- (c) responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- (d) how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- (e) information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- (f) how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the School environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

12.6 School Board Training and Education

To ensure the Board of Trustees is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment, the Board will be trained annually via the ISQ Child Protection Training for Boards.

13 Complaints and reporting processes

Brisbane Girls Grammar School fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the School community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety and wellbeing. The School is committed to ensuring that children and families feel supported when raising concerns, with complaints policies and processes that are accessible, child-focused, clearly communicated, and easy to use.

There are clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding, and this is documented in the School's *Complaints Policy*.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse or other harm, all staff, Board of Trustee members, contractors and volunteers must follow the *Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy*. This Policy addresses complaints and concerns of child abuse or other harm made by or in relation to a child or student, School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the School.

The *Promoting Positive Relationships Policy* covers complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

14 Communications

Brisbane Girls Grammar School is committed to communicating the child safety strategies with the School community through:

- (a) ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on Minerva including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy, and the Staff Code of Conduct
- (b) displaying Child Safety posters around the School
- (c) updates on Minerva and BGGGS News
- (d) ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at School leadership meetings, staff meetings and Board of Trustee meetings.

15 Privacy and information sharing

Brisbane Girls Grammar School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles (APP) contained in the *Privacy Act* and other relevant laws including laws that permit the School to disclose information about child safety and wellbeing to external people and agencies.

For information on how the School collects, uses and discloses information refer to the Privacy Policy.

16 Records management

Records management and practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing. Brisbane Girls Grammar School is committed to a culture of best-practice records and information management, compliant with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

The School is committed to the responsible management of records to ensure that information is accessible and is properly created and captured, maintained and controlled, and disposed of. Creating and keeping full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, is in the best interests of children and should be an integral part of institutional leadership, governance, and culture.

Further information about the School's commitment to appropriate record management can be found in the *Records Management Policy*.

17 Review of child safe practices

Brisbane Girls Grammar School has established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of the child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

The School will:

- (a) review and improve this Policy every two years or after any significant child safety incident
- (b) analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- (c) act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with School staff and our School community.

Document title	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Author	Deputy Principal
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18 Definitions

Refer Appendix A.

19 Related documents

19.6 Relevant legislation

Child Safe Organisations Act 2024

Privacy Act 1988

19.7 Relevant School policies

Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy

Complaints Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Child: a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse and other harm: refers to incidents of or concerns about, including concerns about a risk of, physical, sexual, psychological and emotional harm, neglect, grooming and exposure to family violence, regardless of by whom or how this harm occurs

Child safety and wellbeing: includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

Child connected work: relates to work performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present

Child-related work: is work performed at or for the School by a staff member, volunteer or contractor that usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child (unless the direct contact is occasional and incidental to the work)

Contractor: outside, independent contractors engaged by the School to perform specific tasks and may include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, and cleaners.

Direct contact: means any contact between a person and a child that involves physical contact, face-to-face contact, contact by post or other written communication, contact by telephone or other oral communication, or contact by email or other electronic communication.

School environment: means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside School hours:

- A campus of the School
- Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the School governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)
- Other locations provided by the School or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to:
 - Outdoor Education
 - sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

School staff: means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the School governing authority to perform child-related work

School Governing Authority: the Board of Trustees at Brisbane Girls Grammar School.

Student: means a person who is enrolled at or attends the School including those aged 18 and above.

Visitor: refers to any adult who attends a School event or in a School environment on a one-off or casual basis. Examples of visitors include, but are not limited to:

- parents, carers and other adult family members of students, when they are attending School events or in a School environment
- people invited by the School or a staff member to attend a School event or to be in a School environment
- people who attend a School environment for commercial purposes, such as for deliveries or sales purposes

Volunteer: means a person who performs work for the School in a School environment without remuneration or reward.