



Child Safe Policy

Purpose

The South Eastern Independent Schools Association (SEISA) Child Safe Policy demonstrates our association's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of the association's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all SEISA staff, SEISA member school staff, volunteers, and contractors (whether they work in direct contact with students or not).
- applies in all physical and online member school or SEISA environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers.
- should be read together with our other Child Safe policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the SEISA website.

Definitions

The following terms in this policy have specific definitions:

- child.
- child safety.
- child abuse.
- child-connected work.
- child-related work.
- school environment.
- school boarding environment.
- school staff.
- school boarding premises staff.
- school governing authority.
- school boarding premises governing authority.
- student.
- volunteer.



Statement of commitment to child safety

SEISA is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people, and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where 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 students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our member 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 member school environments. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 within our association, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

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

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.

Roles and responsibilities

SEISA leadership team

Our SEISA leadership team (comprising the principals or their nominees from all SEISA member schools) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The SEISA Executive will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes, and practices are in place and followed in their member schools and when students or staff are attending SEISA events.
- 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 with the SEISA community.
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered.
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students when participating in SEISA events.
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the SEISA community, including at leadership team meetings and meetings held between SEISA staff and member school staff.



- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers within their member schools to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse.
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training (provided by the member school or the Department of Education and Training).
- follow the member school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.
- act in accordance with their member schools and SEISA Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with the member school and SEISA Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.
- Sign a child safe declaration

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

The SEISA Executive officer will act in the role of Child Safety Officer to support the principals to implement the SEISA child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The SEISA principals and Child Safety Officer are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Executive Officer is responsible for monitoring the compliance with the Child Safe Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Executive Officer if they have any concerns about compliance with the Child Safe Policy.
- The Executive Officer is responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.

Our SEISA Leadership team maintains and monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safe governance

The SEISA executive are committed to monitoring for Child Safety risks and making adjustments to policies and procedures, whenever necessary.

Child Safety remains a standing agenda item at all SEISA sport, cultural, leadership and executive meetings. Schools are encouraged to raise any suggestions or issues of concern, at any time.

My only suggestion would be to add in a bit on the role of the Executive in monitoring for Child Safe risks as a regular agenda item etc.



Child Safe Code of Conduct

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

As an association, we identify, assess, and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our member school child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safe Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. The SEISA leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safe Risk Register at least annually.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

As an association, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe community where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, identity, and safety. We actively create opportunities for those students as it is important community to have a voice and presence in our association planning, policies, and activities.

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at SEISA, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support within our member schools that can be seen through the competition and collaboration of students in our SEISA events.

Students and families can access information on how to report concerns by contacting their member school or the SEISA Executive Officer.

When SEISA is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, 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.

Family engagement

Our families are an important part of the SEISA community and have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at SEISA we are committed to providing families and the community with accessible information about the associations child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.



We do this by:

- Ensuring all our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at www.seisa.com.au

Input from the SEISA community into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices is welcome. Any concerns and ideas for improvement can be submitted to: eo@seisa.com.au

Diversity and equity

As a child safe association, 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 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 and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- children and young people with disabilities.
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence.
- international students.
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Suitable staff and volunteers

At SEISA member schools there is a robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration.
- 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 job and working with children.

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in the child safety and wellbeing induction program of their member school. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safe Policy.
- the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- the Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.



Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with member school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

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, SEISA 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 and will include guidance on:

- member school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices.
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually.
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students.
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm.
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students.
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations.
- 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 our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

Complaints and reporting processes.

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

Each member school has clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding to them. The Complaints Policy for each member school should be obtained from each school directly.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers must follow our Mandatory Reporting Policy.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our association follows:

- the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child.
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending.



Communications

SEISA is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the SEISA community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safe Policy (this document), Child Safe Code of Conduct, and the Mandatory Reporting Policy.
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and meetings between SEISA staff and staff from member schools.

Privacy and information sharing

SEISA collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

Review of child safety practices

At SEISA, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our Child Safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident.
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice.
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with staff and our school community.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safe Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related member school policies, procedures, and codes. Relevant SEISA policies include our:

- SEISA Code of Conduct.
- SEISA Inclusion Policy.
- SEISA First Aid Policy.
- SEISA Adverse Weather Policy.
- SEISA Concussion Policy.

Related Department of Education and Training policies

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)



- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

Policy status and review

The SEISA Executive is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safe Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the wider SEISA community.

Approval

Created date	05/03/2026
Consultation	SEISA Leadership Team
Endorsed by	SEISA Executive
Endorsed on	17/3/2026
Next review date	17/3/2028

