

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Contents

1	PURPOSE	2
2	BACKGROUND	2
3	SCOPE	3
4	DEFINITIONS	3
5	POLICY STATEMENT	3
6	CHILD SAFE PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS	4
7	ACCOUNTABILITY and RESPONSIBILITY	4
8	TRAINING	5
9	REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE OR HARM	5
10	COMPLAINTS OR DISCLOSURE ABOUT BIALA STAFF or SCHOOL	5
11	RELEVANT LEGISLATION	6
12	KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS	6
13	GLOSSARY	6
14	NOTES	6

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide information in regard to the policies, practices and procedures that Biala School has developed and maintains in order to protect the safety and welfare of all students; and to minimise the risk of abuse misconduct and misuse of positional power.

2 BACKGROUND

Children's safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests are paramount. Educators and carers, both inside schools and in after school care settings, play a crucial role in providing a child safe environment, protecting children from harm, abuse and neglect, and responding to and reporting incidents, suspected incidents and concerns.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended 10 Child Safe Standards, drawing on its findings, research and consultation about what makes organisations child safe.

The Child Safe Standards provide a benchmark against which organisations can assess their child safe capacity and set performance targets. The Standards provide tangible guidance for organisations to drive a child safe culture, adopt strategies and act to put the interests of children first, to keep them safe from harm.

The Child Safe Scheme gives the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) additional powers to monitor and investigate how organisations implement the Child Safe Standards to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Under the Scheme, certain child-related organisations including in the Education, Early Childhood, Health and Youth Justice sectors, must implement the Child Safe Standards.

The Office of the Children's Guardian is an independent statutory body that promotes the interests, safety and rights of children and young people in NSW. The core functions of the Office of the Children's Guardian include administering Working With Children Checks, Reportable Conduct Scheme and implementation of the Child Safe Standards.

The 10 Child Safe Standards are:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child-focused.
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all management and staff of Biala School, and Biala Support Services, which includes volunteers, casual workers and contractors.

4 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

OCG	Means the Office of The Children’s Guardian, an independent statutory authority in NSW
The School	Means Biala School
Staff	Means all employees, contractors and volunteers who have direct contact with children and students of the school
Student	Means any child or young person enrolled at Biala School

5 POLICY STATEMENT

Biala School is a unique learning environment that caters for the needs of students with neuro-developmental needs who find mainstream education settings difficult. The student population consists entirely of young people with physical needs as well as those with intellectual disabilities and autism. All students require an extensive level of educational support and intervention and are provided with individualised education programs.

The school promotes and maintains a culture of support and inclusion that does not tolerate discrimination, abuse, neglect or exploitation. This policy outlines the school’s expectations of all staff to provide a safe environment for children and sets out its approach to mitigating and managing risks that may occur during everyday activities and operations of the school.

The school’s priority is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child within its care, and includes all aspects of child safety and protection of students from abuse or other harm. Work systems, practices, policies and procedures to ensure a child safe environment at the school have been established and are reviewed and maintained regularly.

The School’s Child Safe Policy is guided by the following principles:

- Recognise children’s rights and interests
- Build and maintain a child safe culture and environment
- Provide support and protection to staff who report incidents under this policy.

6 CHILD SAFE PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS

6.1 All staff are expected to treat children with respect and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

6.2 All Biala staff and visitors must:

- a) For security, sign in and out of the school premises using the 'Passtab' system
- b) Comply with relevant legislation including Working With Children Check and mandatory reporting requirements.
- c) Before photographing or filming a child or using children's image for work related purposes, obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child.
- d) Ensure the school's communications present children in a dignified and respectful manner and do not reveal identifying information about a child.
- e) Not use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium.
- f) Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, physically or emotionally abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- g) Immediately report to their manager concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and any failure to comply with this policy.
- h) Immediately disclose to the school all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relate to child exploitation and abuse, including those that occurred before or during association with the school.

7 ACCOUNTABILITY and RESPONSIBILITY

7.1 Ensuring the safety, security, welfare and wellbeing of children is the responsibility of all staff.

7.2 The school will:

- Regularly review the Child Safe Policy
- Undertake risk assessments in relation to child safety activities, to identify and evaluate the risk of harm or abuse, and put in place appropriate strategies to manage identified risks;
Student Supervision Policy
- Regularly review the safety and security policies and procedures for students, staff and visitors when accessing and whilst on School premises;
'Emergency Evacuation, Critical Incidents and Lockdown Policy and Procedures'
'First Aid, Health and Medical Management policy and procedures'
'School Open and Lock Up procedures'
- Regularly review the School *'Anti-Bullying Policy'*
- Regularly review student behaviour management strategies;
'Discipline policy and procedures'

Management Plan

- Coordinate child safe training for staff and monitor compliance
- Maintain records of relevant child safe complaints

- Publish the School's Child Protection Policy
- Publish the School's Anti-Bullying Policy

7.3 All staff will:

- Ensure child safety is a priority when undertaking activities both within and outside of the school
- Complete all Child Safety training as directed.
- Appropriately report potential risk to child safety including any breaches of this policy.
- Maintain a current Working with Children Check including reporting any change in circumstances

8 TRAINING

8.1 All staff must complete their Biala School induction training.

8.2. All staff must complete the school's annual mandatory training in regard to their Child Protection Policy obligations

8.3. All staff must complete their annual Professional Development requirements

9 REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE OR HARM

Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for people to report suspected child abuse and neglect. The failure to protect a child at risk of child sexual abuse offences and/or failure to report child sexual abuse is an offence.

In understanding their obligations, all staff must follow the procedures for Mandatory Reporting as set out in the school's 'Child Protection Policy Procedures'

10 COMPLAINTS OR DISCLOSURE ABOUT BIALA STAFF or SCHOOL

10.1 All complaints made to the school about staff and which involve children will be investigated in accordance with the *Biala School Child Protection Policy and Procedures*.

10.2 Complaints made to the school which concern the staff but do not directly involve children, will be investigated in accordance with the *Biala School Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures* or *Whistleblower Protection Policy* as appropriate.

These Policies are published on the Biala School website.

11 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Children’s Guardian Act 2019
Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
Crimes Act 1900
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015
Disability Inclusion Act 2014
Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

12 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

Enrolment and Attendance Policy and Procedures
Child Protection Policy and Procedures
Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures
Emergency Evacuation, Critical Incidents and Lockdown Policy and Procedures
First Aid, Health and Medical Management policy and procedures
Whistleblower Protection Policy
Anti-bullying policy
Discipline Policy and Procedures
Staff Code of Conduct (encompasses Discrimination and Harassment)
Biala Support Services Employee Handbook
Student Supervision Policy
School Open and Lock Up procedures

13 GLOSSARY

Passtab	a staff and visitor management system which manages on-site lists of visitors, students and staff onsite in real time. In cases of emergency, authorised staff can use their mobile device to access up to the minute lists and check off individuals within the platform’s interface
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14 NOTES

14.1	Contact Officer	Business Manager
14.2	Implementation Officer	Head of Education
14.3	Approval Authority / Authorities	Principal

14.4	Date Approved	11 th January 2024
14.5	Date of Commencement	29 th January 2024
14.6	Date for Review	31st January 2027
14.7	Documents Superseded by this Policy	N/A
14.8	Amendment History	The Policy Unit will complete this section as required.