

Child Safety Policy - Youth Version

Introduction:

This is a written guideline to show how Bendigo TAFE and Kangan Institute (or the TAFE) value the safety, rights, and views of children and young people and to help children and young people know their rights and how they or their family can report concerns.





A 'child' is anyone under the age of 18 according to Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) Victoria.

What is the CCYP? The CCYP is an organisation that has special powers to make sure organisations like the TAFE follow the law and the Child Safe Standards (the Standards). The Standards are a set of guidelines that by law the TAFE must follow, see [here](#).

For translated information about the Child Safe Standards [here](#).

Purpose: The reasons behind why we have child safety guidelines:

To ensure that children and young people experience the basic human right to be protected from harm and all forms of child abuse, we do this by making sure we:

-  Respect and empower children and young people.
-  Ensure a safe physical and online environment.
-  Value diversity and unique identities.
-  Look at ways we can improve.

Scope: Who does this document apply to?

This applies to all adults who are workers, volunteers, students at the TAFE. It also concerns anyone who cares or is responsible for a child that they bring onto campuses. It is every adult's responsibility to keep children and young people safe.

Principles: Guidelines we must follow.

Committed to Child Safety

The TAFE is a child safe organisation and is committed to providing a safe learning environment, and opportunities for children and young people to participate in education and to empower all children under 18 years of age. The TAFE has a zero-tolerance towards child abuse, which means concerns raised are not ignored and are taken seriously.

Provide a Duty of Care

The TAFE must follow the Standards and Health and Safety laws and take steps to protect children and young people from risks that may be foreseen by making campuses and the online space safe for children and young people.

The TAFE has workers who specialise in different types of support and youth friendly spaces where children and young people can relax with friends during breaks, these are supervised by youth workers at Bendigo City and Broadmeadows campuses. For more information about different types of supports available, including Indigenous support, disability, counselling, and more, see.

-  Bendigo TAFE support [here](#)
-  Kangan Institute support [here](#)

Empower Children and Young People

[Human Rights laws](#) mean children and young people have a right to safety and to have a say about decisions that concern them. It is illegal in Australia to breach someone's human rights.

The TAFE has a child safety group who meet quarterly online. Students and parents or carers are invited to join this group and voice their values and opinions to help the TAFE improve. To join please email childsafety@kangan.edu.au

Child safety and student counsellors provide information sessions about rights and responsibilities, how deal with and report concerns and supports available at the TAFE and in the community. A free information training module is available to all students in their MyLearning portal. It takes about 20-30 minutes to complete, to access and self-enrol.

- ✚ Log into your MyLearning account
- ✚ Click on this [MyLearning \(trainingvc.com.au\)](https://trainingvc.com.au)
- ✚ Click on the 'Student Safety' module
- ✚ Follow the prompts to enrol and compete.

Students can give feedback in this module as well as the annual student survey, all feedback is valued and incorporated into practice where possible.

It is important the TAFE is a safe and inclusive place for all children and young people so as not to discriminate, vilify, be unfair or unjust. It is illegal to discriminate or treat someone unfairly based on things like age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

If this were to happen, please speak to any worker you feel safe to do so. Anyone including students can provide feedback or a complaint to the TAFE [here](#).

- ✚ Bendigo TAFE [here](#)
- ✚ Kangan Institute [here](#)

Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Governance and Leadership

All levels of leadership at the TAFE are responsible for child safety and must make sure we follow the Standards and the law.

Communicate with Parents and Carers

It is important that regular communication with parents or carers of students under 18, concerning wellbeing, needs, attendance, and learning progress, happens as this promotes safety.

For VETDSS students, communication with the student's secondary college, the main education provider, occurs so that the school can tell parents or carers about student attendance, progress, and wellbeing whilst at the TAFE.

A parent or carer (or the school) are required to inform the TAFE and approve student absences.

Low attendance that has not been explained puts the student at risk of being withdrawn from the course and for students under the age of 17 the Department of Education notified.

Ensure People are Safe to Work with Children

The TAFE ensures people are safe to work or volunteer with children by making sure they have a Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) at minimum per Victorian worker screening laws.

Code of Conduct

Workers and volunteers must follow the Employee Code of Conduct, which states.

Appropriate behaviours when working with children and young people:

- ✦ *Upholding the TAFE commitment to child safety and child safety policy.*
- ✦ *Treating students and families in the community with respect, equity, and fairness.*
- ✦ *Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child.*
- ✦ *Promoting the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
- ✦ *Promoting the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.*
- ✦ *Promoting the safety, participation, and empowerment of students with a disability*
- ✦ *Promoting the safety, participation, and empowerment of students of diverse sex and gender identities and sexual orientations.*
- ✦ *Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the TAFE child safety officer.*
- ✦ *Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.*
- ✦ *If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.*
- ✦ *Observing professional boundaries with children, including when interacting with children from the TAFE and outside of the TAFE.*

Unacceptable behaviours when working with children and young people:

- ✦ *Condone or participate in any behaviour with a child that is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.*
- ✦ *Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse.*
- ✦ *Use hurtful, discriminatory, racist, or offensive behaviour or language with a child.*
- ✦ *Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts or special treatment).*
- ✦ *Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context.*
- ✦ *Engage in any unnecessary physical contact with a child unless in the context of the learning environment.*
- ✦ *Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.*
- ✦ *Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting.*
- ✦ *Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, sex, gender identity, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, or ethnicity.*
- ✦ *Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.*
- ✦ *Photograph or video a child in an institutional environment except per institute policy or where required for duty of care purposes.*
- ✦ *Use any computer, mobile phone, or other digital devices to exploit or harass a child or in any way access inappropriate material or content related to children.*

All students must follow the student code of conduct and are responsible for their safety and safety of others or risk being placed on a behaviour contract. Workers and volunteers, if failing to follow the code of conduct risk things like being placed on a performance improvement plan.

Provide Training

Workers and volunteers must have regular training, so they know how to identify and report safety concerns and risks to the correct people at the TAFE.

Report Concerns

Some safety concerns such as a young person has been injured or at risk of injury at the TAFE, are reported to Health and Safety workers. They investigate what went wrong and how to make the TAFE safe, to reduce the risk of it happening.

They may also have to report what happened and what the TAFE has done to make it safer to WorkSafe, an authority that has powers to make sure workplaces are not only safe for workers but people using the workplace, like students and visitors.

When there is a child safety abuse concern for example.

- ✚ A child has been sexually touched or [groomed](#) by an adult.
- ✚ A child has bruises in spots that don't match the explanation.
- ✚ A child becomes anorexic because the parent picks on their weight.
- ✚ A child is weak and hungry because the parent locks away the food.
- ✚ A child aged 10 year or more sexually assaults someone.
- ✚ A pregnant person drinks to excess placing the unborn child at risk of harm.
- ✚ A child self-harms or talks about wanting to die.

These types of concerns must be reported by the worker or volunteer to the TAFE child safety officer.

It also may, but not always, involve a legal requirement to report to authorities outside of the TAFE such as Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection and Victoria Police.

Certain workers like teachers, counsellors or senior leaders are at risk of committing an offence if they do not report certain types of concern, to certain authorities or take steps to keep children and young people safe from serious abuse risks, like being sexually assaulted or groomed. In Victoria, the [Centre Against Sexual Assault](#) (CASA) are specialists when it comes to supporting people impacted by sexual assault.

When a report is made to the Child Safety Officer and/or authorities wherever possible the child or young person is kept informed and included in decisions that impact them by the worker reporting the concern, and/or providing support to the child or young person, such as a teacher or student counsellor. This is to be done in an age and culturally appropriate manner.

Parents or carers should also be told what has happened and who the matter reported to. At times this is not appropriate or possible as it may put the child or young person or even the worker at risk of harm. Wherever possible the young person and parent or carer are informed of the decision to report to authorities.

If the abuser was a worker or volunteer this is called reportable conduct, and this must be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People who have powers to make sure the TAFE investigate and tell the Commission what they have done to make it safe for children and young people. Reportable conduct will in most cases be reported to Victoria Police as well.

Concerned about the safety of a child or young person? Contact childsafety@kangan.edu.au. In an emergency, please call '000'. See child safety pages here.

- ✚ Kangan Institute [here](#)
- ✚ Bendigo TAFE [here](#).