

HORIZONS COLLEGE – POLICY & PROCEDURE

STUDENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish and promote a safe, inclusive and culturally responsive environment for all students, ensuring their safety and wellbeing are prioritised in every aspect of the school's operations. This policy provides written processes about how the school will implement and comply with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle as required under the *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024* (Qld).

Scope: The School Community – students and staff including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements, members of the broader school community, including parents/guardians, and visitors.

- References:**
- *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*
 - *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)*
 - *QFCC Guidelines for implementing the Child Safe Standards in Queensland*
 - Horizons College Child Protection Policy

Policy Name:	Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy		Version 202601_01
Policy Type:	Mandatory Policies, Frameworks & Strategies*		
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Note: Policy types marked with asterisks as follows are:

* published on school website

** only mandatory for schools incorporated through the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)

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Definitions

Child safe entity, as per s10 of the *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD*, is an entity—

- (a) that provides—
 - (i) services specifically for children; or
 - (ii) facilities specifically for use by children who are under the supervision of the entity; and
 - (b) that is either—
 - (i) mentioned in [schedule 1](#); or
 - (ii) prescribed by regulation.
- (2) However, an individual is not a child safe entity unless the individual carries on a business as an entity mentioned in subsection (1), including, for example, as a sole trader or partner in a partnership under the *Partnership Act 1891, section 5*.¹

Child safe standards, as per s9 of the *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD*, are the following standards applying to an entity—

- (a) child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity’s organisational leadership, governance and culture;
- (b) children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;
- (c) families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing;
- (d) equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice;
- (e) people working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice;
- (f) processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused;
- (g) staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training;
- (h) physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed;
- (i) implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved;
- (j) policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children.²

Student, is any child or young person of any age, enrolled or seeking enrolment at Horizons College.

Universal Principle, in implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards, a child safe entity must provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons (the Universal Principle).³

QFFC, Queensland Family and Child Commission

¹ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s10*

² *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s9*

³ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s11(2)*

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Objectives

Horizons College will implement and comply with the Child Safe Standards and understand they may be required to give an authorised officer of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) information about the school's compliance. In implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards, Horizons College will provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of students who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons (the Universal Principle). The school will have regard to [Guidelines](#) made by the QFCC in implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle⁴.

As per the Guidelines, this policy outlines the ways in which Horizons College actions and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of students. Rules and expectations regarding student safe practices are outlined for staff, volunteers and community members with the aim of establishing a student safe environment⁵.

This policy will:

- Set out the school's expectations, practices, and approaches in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards, including the Universal Principle
- Be displayed for public access on the school's website and at the school's office
- Cover acceptable and unacceptable student to student, and student to adult interactions
- Describe the school's commitment to equity, inclusion and cultural safety and how the organisation recognises, responds and respects these factors.

Principles

The implementation of, and compliance with, the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle by Horizons College are to be based on the following fundamental principles:

- (a) Child safe entities, including Horizons College, are responsible for continuously improving the ways in which, in their operations—
 - (i) the safety of children is promoted; and
 - (ii) child abuse is prevented; and
 - (iii) allegations of child abuse are properly responded to;⁶
- (b) The Child Safe Standards are not a simple checklist. They encourage child safe entities to think about how their day-to-day work protects children's rights and safety.⁷

Responsibilities

Horizons College is responsible for developing and implementing this Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy and related policies and procedures to ensure it fulfils its CSS and Universal Principle obligations.

All governing body members, staff and volunteers at Horizons College are responsible for acting in compliance with this policy and related policies and procedures.

⁴ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s11*

⁵ *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland, QFCC, p94*

⁶ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s14*

⁷ *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland, QFCC, p4*

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Implementation of the Child Safe Standards

1. Leadership and Culture

Student safety and wellbeing is embedded in Horizons College's leadership, governance and culture.⁸

Statement of Commitment

The Board of Horizons College of Learning and Enrichment is unequivocally committed to ensuring that every student is safe, respected, supported and able to thrive. We recognise that student safety and wellbeing are fundamental to learning, belonging and positive life outcomes, and we accept our responsibility to provide an environment where every young person feels valued, protected and empowered.

Horizons College exists to serve young people who have often experienced significant challenge, trauma, disengagement or exclusion. Our Vision is for schooling to be a happy and inspiring experience, where every student develops intellectually, personally and socially and is nurtured and challenged to discover their potential, passion and purpose. Our Mission is to deliver an exceptional student experience that motivates and inspires young people to achieve their highest potential and prepare them for a meaningful and successful life after school. These commitments guide every decision we make as a governing body.

We commit to embedding student safety and wellbeing into the leadership, governance, culture and daily practice of the College. We uphold and implement the Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld), ensuring that the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to cultural safety is actively protected, respected and promoted. We recognise that cultural identity, connection to Country and community, and lived experience must be honoured in the way we care for and support students.

We affirm that all students have the right to be safe from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. This includes students with disability, students who identify as LGBTQIA+, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students experiencing vulnerability. We are committed to equity, inclusion and dignity, and we work actively to remove barriers that may prevent any student from feeling safe, heard and respected.

We place student voice at the centre of our approach. Students are encouraged and supported to speak up, to participate in decisions that affect them, and to raise concerns in ways that are safe, accessible and developmentally appropriate. We listen to students, take their views seriously, and respond with care, transparency and accountability.

We commit to building strong, respectful partnerships with parents, carers, families, Elders and community organisations, recognising that student safety and wellbeing are strengthened when schools and communities work together. We value open communication, shared responsibility and collaborative problem-solving.

We ensure that all people working with students at Horizons College are suitable, well-trained and supported to uphold our child-safe values in practice. We maintain high standards for recruitment, induction, professional learning and conduct, and we respond decisively to any concerns, allegations or risks to student safety.

⁸ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(a)*



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We commit to continuous improvement. We regularly review our policies, procedures, data and practices to identify risks, learn from experience and strengthen our systems of protection and support. We hold ourselves accountable to students, families, regulators and the wider community for the effectiveness of our safeguarding culture.

This Statement of Commitment reflects our PRIDE values — Participation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Empathy, Kindness, Inclusivity, Resilience, Collaboration, Responsibility, Gratitude, Authenticity and Imagination — and expresses our unwavering belief that every young person deserves to feel safe, belong and be supported to become the best version of themselves.

Risk Management

Horizons College implements robust risk management processes to prevent, identify, and mitigate risks to students, and is committed to the monitoring of risk to the safety of students on an ongoing basis. Horizons College will utilise various risk management tools including the school's Risk Management Framework, Risk Management Policy Statement, Risk Management Procedure, Risk Registers, Work Health & Safety Policy and associated plans to assist it in this process and will keep appropriate records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to risks to students.

Code of Conduct

All staff will ensure that their behaviour towards, and relationships with students, reflect proper standards of care for students. Staff, contractors and volunteers must not cause harm to students. The school's Code of Conduct (Board) and Staff Code of Conduct define acceptable and unacceptable behaviours toward students and are aligned with the Child Safe Standards.

Information Sharing & Recordkeeping

Staff and volunteers understand their obligations in information-sharing and maintaining accurate, secure records about student harm and abuse concerns, disclosures, and responses.

2. Student Voice

Students are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.⁹

Horizons College is committed to championing the voices of children and young people, ensuring they have genuine agency in matters that affect them. We listen to students in age-appropriate and culturally appropriate ways and create safe, structured opportunities for them to express their views.

Horizons College uses the curriculum and educational programs to actively promote positive peer relationships and reduce student isolation by embedding learning experiences that strengthen social skills, empathy and respectful behaviours. Through age-appropriate lessons and whole-school wellbeing programs, students are also provided with access to sexual abuse prevention education that builds their understanding of personal safety, protective behaviours and where to seek help. Together, these curriculum-based approaches support safer, more connected and more informed students.

Horizons College ensures that all staff and volunteers are consistently attuned to indicators of harm and abuse and are equipped to recognise when a student may need support. Age-appropriate and trauma-informed processes are in place to help students communicate their concerns safely and confidently, and

⁹ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(b)*

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staff actively respond to these disclosures with care and professionalism in accordance with Horizons College's Child Protection Policy.

3. Family and Community

Families and the community are informed and involved in promoting student safety and wellbeing.¹⁰

Horizons College recognises the vital role families and communities play in the safety, wellbeing, and education of students. We value strong, respectful, and collaborative partnerships with families and the broader school community.

We intentionally build inclusive relationships, particularly with First Nations families, local community members, and Elders. We honour Country and embed an Acknowledgement of Country in our practices to ensure students understand the importance of knowing and respecting the land on which we learn.

Parents and carers are provided with opportunities to contribute to the school community through the Parents and Advisory Group (PAG), which provides a forum for parent and carer voice, feedback and discussion of school priorities. Additional opportunities for input are provided through parent and carer surveys, enrolment and review meetings, and direct consultation with staff and school leadership.

Parents and carers are also able to contribute to the development and review of relevant policies and procedures through consultation processes, including PAG discussions, surveys and direct engagement with the College.

The school communicates regularly with parents and carers through email, the parent portal, school newsletters and meetings, ensuring families are kept informed about the school's operations, student wellbeing and key decisions.

Horizons College is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families. This commitment is reflected through Acknowledgement of Country, culturally responsive practice, and respectful engagement with families as part of the school's wellbeing and support processes.

4. Equity and Diversity

Equity is upheld, and the diverse needs of students are respected in policy and in practice.¹¹

Horizons College is committed to creating an inclusive, equitable environment where all students feel safe, respected, and supported. We actively work to remove barriers to participation and ensure our practices reflect cultural safety for all students.

This commitment is actioned through the following:

- Student Disability Discrimination Policy
- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Student Bullying Policy

¹⁰ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(c)*

¹¹ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(d)*

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5. People

People working with students are suitable and supported to reflect student safety and wellbeing values in practice.¹²

Horizons College is committed to recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff in such a way that limits risks to students. In particular, Horizons College will:

- Ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to student from staff via:
 - Accurate position descriptions, including whether the successful applicant must be a teacher registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (who has been subject to relevant police and other safety checks), whether a Blue Card is necessary for the successful applicant, the responsibilities and supervision associated with the position, the nature and environment of the service provided to students, and the experience and qualifications required by the successful applicant.
 - Advertising the position with a clear statement about the school's commitment to safe and supportive work practices and identifying that candidates will be subject to a teacher registration check or Blue Card screening, a police check, referee checks, identification verification and the requirement to disclose any information relevant to the candidates' eligibility to engage in activities including students.
 - A selection process that includes assessing the application via an interview process, and referee and other checks (as identified above) based on the accurate position description.
 - A probationary period of employment, which allows the school to further assess the suitability of the new staff and to act as a check on the selection process.
- Ensure that its training and management procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to students from staff via:
 - Management processes that are consistent, fair and supportive.
 - Performance management processes to help staff to improve their performance in a positive manner.
 - Supportive processes for staff when they are experiencing challenges, such as mentoring, mediation, conflict resolution, coaching, additional training, and external support and counselling services.
 - An induction program which thoroughly addresses the school's policies and procedures, particularly its expectations regarding student risk management, and to assist staff to understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for students.
 - Training new and existing staff on an ongoing basis to enhance skills and knowledge and to reduce exposure to risks, as follows:
 - the school's policies and procedures
 - identifying, assessing and minimising risks to students
 - handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm to a student.
 - Keeping a record of the training provided to staff.
 - Exit interviews to assist the school to identify broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and wellbeing of students at the school.

¹² *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(e)*

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6. Complaints

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.¹³

Horizons College is committed to maintaining a student-focused approach to receiving and responding to complaints. Our Complaints Handling Policy and Complaints Handling Procedures outline how concerns can be raised, the roles and responsibilities of staff, and the processes used to respond to different types of matters. We ensure that all complaints are taken seriously, addressed promptly and thoroughly, and managed in line with our reporting, privacy and employment law obligations.

Any concerns, disclosures or allegations relating to harm or abuse of a student are managed under the school's Child Protection Policy, which sets out our mandatory obligations to act protectively and report to the appropriate authorities.

7. Skills and Knowledge

Staff and volunteers of the school are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep students safe through ongoing education and training.¹⁴

The school will train its staff in processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students on their induction and will refresh training annually.¹⁵

8. Physical and Online Environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for students to be harmed.¹⁶

Horizons College proactively identifies and mitigates risks within both the physical and online environments, ensuring that safety measures do not compromise students' privacy or healthy development. Staff and students use online platforms in line with the school's code of conduct and related policies, supporting a safe, respectful and well-managed digital learning environment.

For further details about how Horizons College manages risk see 1. Leadership and Governance above.

9. Continuous Improvement

Implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved.¹⁷

Horizons College is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement in student safety, wellbeing and cultural respect. We recognise that embedding the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle is a continuing journey that requires ongoing commitment, regular review and continual strengthening of our practices.

Horizons College will:

¹³ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(f)*

¹⁴ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(g)*

¹⁵ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(c)*

¹⁶ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(h)*

¹⁷ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(i)*

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- Review policies, procedures and practices regularly to ensure they remain effective, responsive and appropriate for the Horizons College community. This includes undertaking periodic audits, self-assessments and reflective practice to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- Analyse available data including complaints and concerns to identify causes and systemic issues and use these insights to inform continuous improvement of policies, procedures and practices.
- Conduct an annual self-assessment against the Child Safe Standards using the QFCC self-assessment tool or equivalent (ISQ Checklist for implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards, ISQ Readiness Survey or other).
- Develop and implement an improvement plan that has regard for the QFCC Guidelines.
- Measure and monitor outcomes by tracking meaningful indicators such as feedback from staff, students and families, incident reports, harm and abuse reports, training participation, and perceptions of cultural safety to understand current performance and areas requiring enhancement.
- Record, monitor and report to the school governing body regarding any breaches of this policy or related policies.
- Engage the school community in continuous improvement by seeking and listening to feedback, encouraging open dialogue, and partnering with students, families, staff, volunteers and community stakeholders to inform updates to policies and practices.
- Provide ongoing learning, training and development for staff and volunteers, including induction and refreshers, to ensure everyone understands their responsibilities for student safety and cultural safety and is equipped to respond effectively as new risks or needs arise.

10. Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures document how the school is safe for children.¹⁸

Horizons College has embedded its Statement of Commitment to Student Safety and Wellbeing in all relevant policies and procedures. Horizons College has made all relevant policies and procedures publicly available on its website, school intranet, parent portal and copies are available on request from the school office. Staff and volunteers are trained in implementing relevant policies and procedures regularly.

Horizons College ensures that its policies and procedures are accessible, developmentally appropriate and easily understood by all students. Horizons College provides student-friendly versions of key policies using clear language, visual supports and formats that reflect the diverse communication needs of our students. These include simplified guides, posters, visual flow charts, infographics and digital tools such as apps or interactive resources.

Horizons College regularly reviews these materials with student input to ensure they remain relevant, inclusive and effective in supporting students to understand their rights, know how to seek help, and participate confidently in matters affecting their safety and wellbeing.

Horizons College is committed to ensuring its policies and procedures uphold cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities. Where possible, the school will actively

¹⁸ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(j)*



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engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community representatives and cultural advisors in the review, development and implementation of relevant policies and procedures.

Horizons College will embed trauma-aware and trauma-informed practice across all relevant policies, procedures and guidance documents. This includes recognising the impact of trauma on students, understanding how trauma may influence behaviour and communication, and ensuring that staff are equipped to respond with sensitivity and consistency.

Related Horizons College policies:

- Horizons College Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Horizons College Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Horizons College Blue Card Register
- Horizons College Complaints Handling Policy*
- Horizons College Complaints Handling Procedures
- Horizons College Child Protection Policy*
- Horizons College Restricted Person Declaration Form
- Horizons College Risk Management Framework
- Horizons College Staff Code of Conduct
- Horizons College Positive Behaviour Support Policy*

*publicly available on the school website.