

## Embrace Education Child Safety Policy

<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>Embrace Education is a non-profit, university student-run organisation that offers free educational support to disadvantaged high school students in Melbourne, Victoria. The Child Safety Policy outlines the organisation's approach to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Alongside the other key documents, this policy is understood to provide an overview of current policies and procedures which are intended to help prevent, mitigate and appropriately respond to child safety risks.</p>
<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	<p><b>Child:</b> a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.  <b>Young people:</b> any other students enrolled at a high school.          These terms are hereafter collectively referred to as students.</p> <p><b>Child abuse:</b> Child abuse includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Any act committed against a child involving:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) A sexual offence</li> <li>ii) Grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>b) The infliction, on a child, of:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Physical violence</li> <li>ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm</li> </ol> </li> <li>c) The serious neglect of a child</li> </ol> <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p> <p><b>Harm:</b> damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children.  <b>Racism:</b> process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race  <b>Discrimination:</b> practice of unfairly treating a person or group differently from other people or groups of people</p> <p><b>HWC:</b> Homework Clubs  <b>ISP:</b> In-School Tutoring  <b>ITP:</b> Individual Tutoring Program  <b>OTP:</b> Online Tutoring Program</p>
<p><b>Scope</b></p>	<p>The policy and procedures outlined here are intended to apply to all Embrace Education staff, volunteers, and program participants, as well as participants' families and/or communities.</p>
<p><b>What is child abuse?</b></p>	<p>Child abuse includes all types of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Child abuse can result in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity. Harm can arise from a single act or event, or accumulate as part of a series of acts or events over a period of time.          Embrace Education is committed to responding without delay to any suspicions of child abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The indicators and signs of child abuse may be physical or behavioural. These include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disclosure of harm or abuse</li> <li>● Skin injuries including bruises, burns, bites or lacerations</li> <li>● Hiding injury or bruising</li> <li>● Unusually strong or uncharacteristic behaviour change, such as anxiety, withdrawal, hyperactivity</li> <li>● Fear of parents/carer or to go home</li> </ul>

<p><b>Responsibilities</b></p>	<p>Volunteer Executive : Executive members of the committee oversee and approve all policies and practices in collaboration with staff</p> <p>Staff Program Coordinators and Recruitment and Training Officers oversee their respective programs including the relevant administrative and ongoing supervision and support of volunteers throughout their participation in Embrace Education programs.</p> <p>The specific roles of staff are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HWC Coordinators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure that relevant HWC program policies and procedures comply with the Embrace Education Child Safety policy</li> <li>○ Respond to concerns of suspected child abuse as raised by tutors or other Embrace Education members in accordance with the Embrace Education Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</li> </ul> </li> <li>● ISP Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure that relevant ISP program policies and procedures comply with the Embrace Education Child Safety policy</li> <li>○ Respond to concerns of suspected child abuse as raised by tutors or other Embrace Education members in accordance with the Embrace Education Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</li> </ul> </li> <li>● ITP Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure that relevant ITP program policies and procedures comply with the Embrace Education Child Safety policy</li> <li>○ Respond to concerns of suspected child abuse as raised by tutors or other Embrace Education members in accordance with the Embrace Education Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</li> </ul> </li> <li>● OTP Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure that relevant OTP program policies and procedures comply with the Embrace Education Child Safety policy</li> <li>○ Respond to concerns of suspected child abuse as raised by tutors or other Embrace Education members in accordance with the Embrace Education Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Recruitment and Training Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure that volunteer recruitment and training procedures comply with the Embrace Education Child Safety policy and the Volunteer Recruitment and Training Policy</li> <li>○ Ensure that staff recruitment and training procedures comply with the Embrace Education Child Safety policy and the Staff Recruitment and Training Policy</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Volunteer tutors and non-executive committee: All volunteers are responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with relevant legislation and policies. This includes complying with Terms and Conditions of Engagement and following reporting procedures in the event of suspected harm or abuse.</p>
<p><b>Related organisational policies and procedures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recruitment and Training Policies</li> <li>● Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</li> <li>● Risk management assessment</li> <li>● Program-specific Acceptable Practice Policies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relevant legislation and standards</b></p>	<p>This policy was developed to comply with relevant legislation including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Worker Screening Act 2020 Protects children from harm by ensuring that people who work with children have their suitability to do so assessed by a government body</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 Covers the protection of children and young people in Victoria.</li> <li>• Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 Provides an overarching framework for promoting positive outcomes for all children and enforces the Child Safe Standards in Victoria.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy status and review</b>	<p>This policy was approved by the Embrace Education executive on ____.</p> <p>For further information, please get in contact with ____.</p> <p>This policy is due to be reviewed in six month's time at the end of 2022, and following this will be reviewed annually. This will be led by ____.</p>
<b>Statement</b>	<p>All students participating in Embrace Education's programs have a right to be and feel safe. As part of Embrace Education's mission to inspire and empower disadvantaged students, we support the rights of a child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child-safe environment is maintained at all times. The welfare of students participating in Embrace Education programs are our first priority, and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.</p> <p>This includes children from diverse backgrounds, disabled children as well as children of all sexualities and gender identities. As Embrace Education's target demographic includes disadvantaged students of broad backgrounds, we are committed to the principles of cultural safety to ensure their wellbeing.</p>

<b>Child Participation</b>	<p>Students that attend our programs are invited to respond to the biannual student survey distributed by each program. These responses are reviewed by the relevant program coordinator for changes to be made to the program.</p> <p>For all media releases, students involved must have consented by filling in a media consent form signed by their parent or guardian.</p> <p>Resources are provided to staff and volunteers to educate them on child rights-based approaches. Students are encouraged to review the Rights of the Child document to inform them of their rights when participating in the organisation's programs.</p>
<b>Community Participation</b>	<p>For policies, procedures and program amendments, consultation is sought from schools to ensure that this is appropriate to the needs of the students and our partners. Schools are invited to respond to the biannual survey distributed by each program. This survey has embedded child safety questions to seek their perspective on problems and improvements that they have identified. These responses are reviewed by the relevant program coordinator for changes to be made to the program.</p> <p>Parents and guardians of students involved in the ITP and OTP must consent to their student's participation through the relevant consent form, which is distributed before a tutor-student match is finalised.</p>
<b>Respecting Equity and Diversity</b>	<p>&lt;Insert Diversity and Inclusion Statement of Commitment&gt;</p> <p>Students participating in Embrace Education's programs have the right to be respected, including the right to not experience any form of discrimination, regardless of background or circumstance. The organisation is committed to creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children, families and communities. These are outlined in several policy documents, including the Rights of the Child and the program-specific Acceptable Practice Policies.</p>

	<p>Tutors receive training on the diversity of students that engage in the organisation's programs, intercultural skills and how to identify and respond to students at risk.</p> <p>Tutors, staff and other volunteers are informed of the escalation pathway to reporting any concerns regarding any student in the program to the relevant program coordinator. These may include but are not limited to concerns of child abuse, discrimination or racism.</p>
<b>Staff</b>	<p>The organisation ensures that child safety is taken into account during the recruitment and training process of staff in the Staff Recruitment and Training Policy. This includes ensuring staff have the appropriate documents (including ID documents, valid Victorian Working with Children Checks) and undergo an interview and background checks. Staff must read and sign the Terms &amp; Conditions of Engagement/Code of Conduct before commencing their role.</p> <p>Staff are provided with a Child Safety Escalation Pathway and required to consult with the other staff members and Embrace Education Executive Committee with any concerns.</p>
<b>Volunteer</b>	<p>The organisation ensures that child safety is taken into account during the recruitment and training process of volunteers in the Volunteer Recruitment and Training Policy. This includes ensuring volunteers have the appropriate documents (including ID documents, valid Victorian Working with Children Checks) and undergo an interview and reference checks. Volunteer tutors must read and sign the Terms &amp; Conditions of Engagement before commencing their role.</p> <p>Tutors receive training on the diversity of students that engage in the organisation's programs, intercultural skills and how to identify and respond to students at risk. Tutors are provided with a Child Safety Escalation Pathway and required to contact their Program Coordinator with any concerns.</p> <p>Tutors are invited to respond to the biannual tutor survey distributed by each program. This survey has embedded child safety questions to seek their perspective on problems and improvements that they have identified. These responses are reviewed by the relevant program coordinator for changes to be made to the program.</p>
<b>Complaint Systems</b>	<p>Tutors, staff and committee members are advised on the protocol for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This process receives all disclosures, allegations, suspicions, observations or other breaches. All events are to be reported to the relevant Embrace Education program coordinator, school staff member, Embrace Education executive or designated Child Safety Person as soon as possible. The person who receives the initial report may depend on the nature of the complaint. The event will additionally be assessed to evaluate if the matter is to be reported to police, Child Protection and/or the Commission, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care.</p> <p>During training, volunteer tutors are informed of their reporting and privacy obligations.</p> <p>Embrace Education representatives including the program coordinator or executive must document the event using the Incident/Disclosure report form.</p>
<b>Safe Environments</b>	<p>Embrace Education will conduct annual risk assessments of each program to identify areas of improvement and minimise their risk.</p> <p>For all our programs, tutors are trained in their role in providing a safe learning environment for students.</p> <p>In the ITP program, students and tutors are provided with the ITP Acceptable Practice Policy.</p>

	<p>This details numerous guidelines including but not limited to only meeting at public libraries and maintaining a professional relationship with students. Where applicable, Embrace Education has provided guidelines for child safety in the online environment including but not limited to not sharing meeting links and passwords with other parties.</p>
<p><b>Review of Policies and Practices</b></p>	<p>Embrace Education has committed to reviewing this policy and all relevant policies and procedures on a yearly basis, led by ____.</p> <p>We endeavour to consult with schools, students and our volunteers where possible in our review processes to ensure that they are suited for the needs of children.</p> <p>All complaints, incidents and concerns are to be recorded via incident forms filled out by both a volunteer and the relevant Embrace Education personnel, and reviewed to identify causes or systemic weaknesses to implement improvements.</p>
<p><b>Documenting Policies and Procedures</b></p>	<p>All volunteers receive access to the relevant child safety policies for their role. In addition, tutors receive training on child safety during their induction. For documents that are child-facing, including the Rights of the Child document, these are distributed to students and have been written using language that is easy to understand in consultation with stakeholders. These documents are directly shared with students who participate in the ITP and OTP programs or shared with school coordinators for our HWC and ISP programs, to be distributed to students.</p>