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 Organisations Act 2024* (Qld).	
Scope:	All 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.	
Status:	Approved	**Supersedes**: Nil – New
Authorised by:	School Governing Body	**Date of Authorisation**: 26/10/26
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* • Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy • Positive Behaviour Policy	
Review Date:	Annually	**Next Review Date**: 01/11/27
Policy Owner:	School Governing Body	

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 Montessori International College, Forest Glen.

Universal Principle, in implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards, a child safe entity must provide an environment that promotes and

[1] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld) s10
[2] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld) s9

upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons (the universal principle).[3]

QFCC, Queensland Family and Child Commission.

Objectives

MIC 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, MIC will 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). The school will have regard to Guidelines made by the (QFCC) in implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle[4].

As per the Guidelines, this policy outlines the ways in which MIC actions and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of students. Rules and expectations regarding child safe practices are outlined for staff, volunteers and community members with the aim of establishing a child safe environment[5].

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 child to child, and child 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 MIC are to be based on the following fundamental principles:

(a) Child safe entity's, including MIC are responsible for continuously improving the ways in which, in their operations—
(i) the safety of children is promoted; and

[3] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld) s11(2)
[4] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s11.
[5] *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland,* QFCC, p94.

(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

MIC is responsible for developing and implementing this Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy and related policies and procedures to ensure it fulfils its Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle obligations.

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

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards

1. Leadership and Culture

Student safety and wellbeing is embedded in <<school names'>> leadership, governance and culture.[8]

Statement of Commitment

At MIC, the safety, dignity and wellbeing of every child and young person are fundamental to our educational philosophy and our responsibility as a school community.

Guided by the principles of Dr Maria Montessori, we recognise each child as a capable and valued individual, deserving of respect, protection, belonging and the opportunity to develop their full potential. We believe that children thrive in environments where they feel physically, emotionally, culturally and psychologically safe, where their voices are heard and where relationships are built on trust, respect and care.

MIC is committed to taking all reasonable steps to promote the safety and wellbeing of students enrolled at the school and their protection from foreseeable harm. We prioritise child safety in all aspects of our work and do not tolerate any form of child abuse or harm. We act in accordance with the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld) and implement the Child Safe Standards to create a safe, inclusive, and accountable environment. We listen to children, value their views, and support them to participate in decisions that affect them.

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[6] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s14.
[7] *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland,* QFCC, p4.
[8] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s9(a).

MIC is committed to the safety and inclusion of all children, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds, children with disability, LGBTQIA+ children, and children who may be experiencing vulnerability. We also make a clear commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and to providing an environment where their identities, cultures, and connections to Country are respected and upheld.

MIC is committed to being a child safe organisation. We have zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying or any form of harm. The safety and wellbeing of students are paramount in our decisions, relationships, practices and daily operations.

We are committed to:

- **Putting children first:** Upholding the rights, best interests, safety and wellbeing of every student in all aspects of school life.
- **Listening to student voices:** Empowering children and young people to understand their rights, express concerns, participate in decisions affecting them and be taken seriously.
- **Creating safe and inclusive environments:** Respecting diversity, recognising individual needs and abilities, and promoting equity, inclusion and cultural safety, including the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- **Building a culture of shared responsibility:** Ensuring our Board, leadership, staff, volunteers, contractors and wider school community understand and uphold their responsibilities for student safety and wellbeing.
- **Preventing and responding to harm:** Proactively identifying and managing risks, maintaining safe physical and online environments, and responding promptly, appropriately and sensitively to concerns, disclosures and allegations of harm.
- **Supporting safe and capable adults:** Maintaining appropriate recruitment, screening, induction, supervision, professional learning and accountability processes for those working with children and young people.
- **Partnering with families and our community:** Fostering open communication, respectful relationships and shared understanding of our commitment to student safety and wellbeing.
- **Learning and improving:** Regularly reviewing our policies, procedures and practices, listening to feedback and strengthening our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

The MIC Board holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in the College's governance, culture and strategic direction. The Principal and school leadership are responsible for implementing

and maintaining effective student protection practices, supported by all members of the school community.

All concerns about student safety and wellbeing will be taken seriously and addressed in accordance with applicable legislation, mandatory reporting obligations and MIC's student protection policies and procedures. Children and young people will be supported to raise concerns safely, without fear of retaliation.

Our commitment extends beyond compliance. In keeping with Montessori's vision of education as an aid to life, we seek to nurture a community in which every child feels safe, respected, connected and empowered to flourish.

Risk Management

MIC implements robust risk management processes to prevent, identify, and mitigate risks to children, and is committed to the monitoring of risk to the safety of students on an ongoing basis. MIC will utilise various risk management tools including MIC's Child Risk Management Strategy, Board Risk Management Strategy, and Psychosocial Risk Management Strategy to assist it in this process and will keep appropriate records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to risks to children.

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. MIC's Codes of Conduct define acceptable and unacceptable behaviours toward students and are aligned with child safety principles.

At MIC we expect our staff and volunteers to conduct themselves as follows:

- School staff and volunteers are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety and wellbeing of our students. Staff must actively seek to prevent harm to students, and to support those who have been harmed.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Staff and volunteers should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student.
- When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience, staff and volunteers must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable. Staff must always advise the student of what they intend on doing and seek their consent.
- Staff must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student.

- Staff and volunteers must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student.
- Staff and volunteers must treat all students, colleagues and community members with respect, fairness and dignity, regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, language, religion, ability, gender, sexual orientation, or background.
- Staff and volunteers must not engage in any form of racism, discrimination, harassment, or exclusionary behaviour. This includes verbal, written, online or behavioural actions that demean, stereotype or disadvantage an individual or group.
- Staff and volunteers must actively challenge racist or discriminatory behaviour when it occurs and follow school procedures for reporting such incidents.
- Staff and volunteers must promote a culturally safe, inclusive and respectful environment by valuing diversity, acknowledging cultural differences, and modelling culturally responsive behaviour at all times.

Information Sharing & Recordkeeping

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

2. Student Voice

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

MIC 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.

MIC 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.

MIC 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 staff actively respond to these disclosures with care and professionalism in accordance with MIC's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy.

3. Family and Community

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

MIC 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.

MIC provides regular opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to the school community. Parents, carers and the school community are provided with opportunities to contribute to the development and review of relevant policies, procedures and decision-making.

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[9] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s9(b).
[10] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s9(c).

Regular communication through School Stream and emails to families ensures parents, carers and the school community are informed about the school's operations and governance.

MIC is dedicated to the work of reconciliation and actions this commitment through its' planned Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

4. Equity and Diversity

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

MIC 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.

5. People

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

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

- Ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children 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 children.

[11] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s9(d).
[12] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s9(e).

- 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 child.
  - 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.

6. Complaints

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

MIC is committed to maintaining a student-focused approach to receiving and responding to complaints. Our Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure outlines 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

[13] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s9(f).

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 Reporting Concerns of Harm or Abuse 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]

MIC 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 MIC manages risk see 1. Leadership and Governance above.

9. Continuous Improvement

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.[17]

MIC is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement in child 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.

MIC will:

- Review policies, procedures and practices regularly to ensure they remain effective, responsive and appropriate for the College community. This includes undertaking periodic audits, self-assessments and reflective practice to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

[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).

- 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.

10. Policies and Procedures

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

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

MIC ensures that its policies and procedures are accessible, developmentally appropriate and easily understood by all students. MIC provides student-friendly versions of key policies using clear language, visual supports and formats that reflect the diverse communication needs of our students.

Related Policies and Resources

Policies

- MIC Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- MIC WWC Blue Card Policy
- MIC Reports & Resolutions (Complaints Handling) Policy*
- MIC Enrolment Policy*
- MIC Parent Code of Conduct*
- MIC Recruitment Policy
- MIC Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy*
- MIC Staff Code of Conduct
- MIC Student Code of Conduct*
- MIC Community Code of Conduct*
- MIC Behaviour Management Policy*

*Should be publicly available on the school website.

Resources

- Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people
- The Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations checklist for online safety.
- eSafety Commissioner's Toolkit for Schools.
- QFCC self-assessment tool or equivalent

[18] *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), s9(j).