

SAFEGUARDING POLICY



Current version in effect from: 1 Apr 2024
Approved by Council: 8 May 2019
Revised by Council: 9 Oct 2019, 14 Sep 2022
Policy Steward: Chief of Staff

Related documents

Regulation 8 Members of the University

Regulation 9 Code of Conduct

Health and Safety Policy

1. Rationale and Objectives

1.1 In accord with the recommendations from the *Final Report of the Australian Government's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (2017), the University is committed to the safeguarding of children. The University also recognises and includes other young people and vulnerable adults in this commitment.

1.2 The objectives of this Policy are to:

- a) affirm the University's commitment to safeguarding
- b) support the understanding of appropriate standards of behaviour towards children, young people, and vulnerable adults
- c) guide the development of systems and processes that contribute to the prevention and management of risks of abuse of children, young people, and vulnerable adults
- d) encourage a culture and environment that is supportive and protective of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

2. Scope

2.1 This Policy applies to all members of the University and others associated with the University as set out in Regulation 8.

3. Definitions

3.1 **Child/Children:** A person or persons under the age of 18.

3.2 **Young people:** Those who are 18 or over but not advanced in years, and in particular may include those who are in a new environment or who have limited life experience.

3.3 **Vulnerable adults:** These include, but are not limited to, the following: adults who have the lesser (actual or perceived) power in a situation or relationship; those who are new students; those for whom English is not their first language; and those in a situation where perception of gender or hierarchical position is a factor. It is noted that normal behaviours like nervousness and wanting to please or succeed can make adults vulnerable.

- 3.4 **Child abuse and/or neglect:** Can generally be defined as occurring when a child has been, is being, or is likely to be subjected to physical, emotional or sexual actions or inactions which have resulted in, or are likely to result in, harm or injury to the child. This definition is a generalisation of the definitions at law. Jurisdictionally applicable definitions can be obtained from the relevant legislation in Victoria and the other states in which the University operates.
- 3.5 **Concerning behaviour:** The actions or inactions of a person that cause or are perceived to cause or could potentially cause harm (defined below) to a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- 3.6 **Harm:** A detrimental impact on the physical, psychological, emotional or social safety, wellbeing and development of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.

4. **Related Legislation**

- 4.1 For the purposes of application of this Policy related legislation includes (but is not limited to) the following, and to equivalent legislation in states other than Victoria in which the University operates:

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cwlth) and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cwlth)

The Crimes Act 1958 Amendment (Grooming) 2014 (Vic)

The Crimes Act 1958 Amendment (Failure to Disclose) 2014 (Vic)

The Crimes Act 1958 Amendment (Failure to Protect) 2015 (Vic)

The Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 (Vic)

5. **Principles**

- 5.1 The University is committed to providing a safe environment in which all its members flourish and grow.
- 5.2 In particular, the University is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who are members of the University or interact with members.
- 5.3 The University does not tolerate any behaviour which is inconsistent with this commitment by any member of the University or by any person on University premises.
- 5.4 The University has zero tolerance of child abuse in all environments.
- 5.5 The University acknowledges its educative role and obligation to engage in best practice in its commitment to safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- 5.6 The University promotes the understanding and application of clear and appropriate boundaries between staff and students, and between those who are ministering and

those being ministered to, and in other relationships where there is a difference in power (actual or perceived).

6. Actions to Promote Safeguarding

- 6.1 The Chief of Staff is appointed as the University's Fair Treatment and Safeguarding Coordinator by the Vice-Chancellor and is responsible for the provision of information and support to members of the University.
- 6.2 Each College Principal must appoint a Safeguarding Contact Officer to receive, distribute and publish key information within their College regarding safeguarding and to act as a point of contact providing referrals for College members if needed.
- 6.3 Each School must appoint a Fair Treatment and Safeguarding Contact Officer.
- 6.4 All members of the University, including staff, students, external workplace directors and supervisors, who are involved in or undertaking Supervised Theological Field Education or Clinical Pastoral Education or other fieldwork-based units, must hold a current Working With Children Check (or equivalent in states other than Victoria).
- 6.5 In the event of the admission to the University of a student under the age of eighteen in accordance with the *Admissions Policy*, the home College of the student must ensure that:
 - a) all staff members lecturing, supervising, or otherwise working directly with that student have a current Working With Children Check (or equivalent in states other than Victoria)
 - b) the College has a risk management strategy for the safeguarding of students under the age of eighteen.
- 6.6 The University website and Learning Management System (ARK) must include information about this Policy and supporting material including information about the processes of obligation, reportable conduct, and disclosure as legislated by the Victorian Government (and equivalents in other states).

7. Date of Next Review

- 7.1 This Policy must be reviewed no later than 31 December 2029.