



Safeguarding and Child Protection at Wesley College

For Whaanau and Wesleyans



Wesley College
Family, Respect, Responsibility, Excellence

Key Terms

Term	Definition
A Child / Young Person	<p>Wesley College students reflect an age range of 12 – 19 years. As per the Children’s Act 2014 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we recognise a child as someone aged from 0-18 years.</p> <p>We mostly recognise a child as a person under 14 years and a young person as someone aged 14 -18 years.</p> <p>However, this policy supports those aged 18 years or older when meeting additional Children’s Act 2014 definitions, and we primarily define those aged 18 or over as a young adult.</p>
Child Abuse	<p>Section 2, Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 defines child abuse as: “child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.”</p>
Child protection	<p>Is the activity taken to protect those individual children/young people who are at risk of, or who are suffering from, abuse and/or neglect.</p>
Child Safe	<p>Refers to an organisational/school environment that has an open and aware culture, understands child abuse, is supported by robust safeguarding policies, promotes the empowerment and participation of children, identifies and manages child safety risks, and expects all stakeholders to report any allegations, disclosures or concerns for the safety and well-being of children. A child safe environment also ensures that children and young people are culturally safe.</p>
Cultural Safeguarding	<p>Cultural Safeguarding promotes the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. A culturally safe environment is socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for tamariki/children and rangatahi/young people. It is underpinned by shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, and living and working together with dignity and truly listening.¹</p>
Safeguarding	<p>Safeguarding is a proactive, holistic approach to child safety that also protects staff and organisations by seeking to prevent harm. It covers the full spectrum of vulnerability, including child protection concerns relating to harm and abuse in both physical and online environments. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the workforce, involving proactive practices that promote well-being for everyone and aim to prevent harm, including abuse.</p>



Safeguarding You
to Safeguard Children

Our Safeguarding Partners

Wesley College is proud to partner with Holistic Safeguarding, specialists in organisational safeguarding. They continue to support us in developing, embedding, and monitoring child safety best practices that strengthen the safety and wellbeing of all students at the College.

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¹ Revised from An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards (November 2015) -State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services and A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (Version 2.0 December 2015)- Commission for Children and Young People

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Message from the Principal



Brian Evans,
Principal, Wesley College

“Adhering to child safety best practices is essential to providing a nurturing and protective environment for every member of the Wesley College community. We recognise that building a child-safe culture is not a one-time initiative. It requires a committed, comprehensive, and continuous approach. That is why the College has fully embraced the principles set out in this model, including fostering transparency, establishing clear child protection policies, and ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and students are equipped to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.

We are proud of the progress we have made to date and remain firmly dedicated to sustaining a robust framework that empowers students, staff and stakeholders to engage in a safe, respectful, and supportive educational environment. By committing to the highest standards of child safeguarding and protection, we aim not only to protect those in our care but also to set a positive example for other institutions to follow.”

Our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Wesley College provides educational and residential boarding services for approximately 250 rangatahi (youth) aged between 13 and 19. Wesley College is committed to creating a “Safe Environment” and to ensure the well-being of everyone under Wesley College’s care. Therefore, Wesley College has a zero-tolerance stance on child abuse and neglect as part of our commitment to a holistic approach to safeguarding. Wesley College takes all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare and well-being of rangatahi remains our priority.

Aotearoa/New Zealand has significantly high levels of child vulnerability, abuse, and neglect, and these child safety risks do not discriminate. They can be relevant to personal, professional and community environments. Our history has evidenced Wesley College as not being immune to these risks. Hence, we are committed to applying our learnings and strengthening our child safeguarding and protection processes and creating a culture that safeguards everyone, children/young people, whaanau/family, staff and the College.

We seek to advocate and uphold rangatahi’s rights to safety and protection and empower their voice and participation in our safeguarding journey. This includes us creating safe channels and environments to support rangatahi, whaanau and staff in speaking up and speaking out on any child safety complaints or concerns. Wesley College commits to providing designated safeguarding staff and to operating above legislative requirements by leading safeguarding and child protection best practices in all our undertakings.



Embedding Child Safety Best Practices

John Wesley strongly emphasised the importance of every child's well-being and education. His powerful declaration, "**Every Child Matters**", continues to guide Wesley College today. Rooted in our Methodist ethos, we are more than 'just a school.' We are passionate about helping students become the best they can be, shaped by a rich history of education grounded in Christian values and service.

In recent years, however, the College has faced justified accountability for past failures to safeguard students' well-being. As a faith-based institution with residential services, Wesley College was among the establishments involved in New Zealand's Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry, due to allegations of historical abuse. We take this opportunity to again offer an unequivocal apology to all survivors. We acknowledge their courage in coming forward and trust that this guidance is just one of hopefully many reflections of how their bravery has influenced, informed and strengthened student safeguarding at the College today.

Wesley College is now on a significant journey to embed and sustain a robust child safety culture. We have recognised that while certain legislation sets out child safety requirements, these in reality only represent a minimum standard. They omit to capture many points that the College's community would assume are morally and ethically represented. Hence, compliance alone is insufficient to ensure our students' safety. As such, our Governance and Leadership have committed to going beyond compliance by embedding child safeguarding best practices and creating a safeguarding culture where child safety is actively demonstrated as a shared workforce responsibility.

In partnership with organisational safeguarding specialists, we have made significant progress in strengthening our safeguarding structures, policies, procedures, training, and student voice initiatives. We are actively implementing a tailored, best practice approach based on the **10 Child Safe Organisation Principles**. Through this commitment, we are building a culture of safeguarding that protects everyone, promotes positive change, and drives continuous improvement.

The 10 Child Safe Organisation Principles:



Being a Child Safe School

Fide Litteris Labore
By Faith, By Learning, By Hard Work



1. Governance, Leadership and Culture

At Wesley College, our two Boards, Principal, and Leadership Team are united in their commitment to creating a school where every student feels safe, supported, and respected, with safeguarding demonstrated as a shared workforce responsibility. However, we also understand this commitment must be based on active steps, the right knowledge and effective resourcing.



A Safeguarding Culture

🌟 Learning from the Past: The courage of former students coming forward to disclose historical harm and abuse, and our engagement with the Abuse in Care Royal Commission, has significantly influenced and informed the safeguarding strategies being established and embedded in the College today. The organisational lessons are clear: strong, intentional safeguarding systems are essential to prevent harm and ensure students are truly safe. Simply relying on a passion for supporting children and operating to legal requirements is insufficient in preventing child safety risks.

🛡️ A Best-Practice Approach: The College's governance and leadership have committed to ensuring the College goes beyond compliance and seeks to demonstrate child safety best practices. This includes creating a safeguarding culture. Hence, Wesley College is working with external experts to embed practical, proportionate, and sustainable child safety best practice measures and create a safeguarding culture that safeguards everyone.

🔒 Some of Our Governance and Leadership Child Safety Actions:

- **A Public Commitment to Child Safety:** Our commitment to child safety is our public benchmark and is supported by a suite of updated child safety policies, all of which confirm our zero tolerance for abuse.
 - our lead for receiving and responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns. These can be from students, families, staff or any College stakeholder.
- **A Whole-College Child Safety Plan:** We have established a Child Safety Improvement Plan centred on the 10 Child Safe Organisation Principles. It also includes Royal Commission recommendations and is tailored to Wesley College. Child safety will also be a priority in other key plans, like our strategic plan, with measurable goals to track progress and ensure the College continuously improves.
 - We continue establishing a pool of **Safeguarding Champions** to support the Safeguarding Officer and the College. Our Champions represent frontline staff across all areas of the school and hostels, who students or staff can also talk to if they have worries or need support.
- **A Clear Safeguarding Structure:** To strengthen our safeguarding structures, we've embedded safeguarding into the College's framework by putting dedicated individual and collective supports in place:
 - We have a **Designated Safeguarding Trustee** who provides governance-level support to the College and acts as a named contact for any concerns about senior staff or historical harm and abuse.
 - Our **Safeguarding Committee** drives collaboration across the school and hostels to lead, monitor, and review our College Child Safety Improvement Plan, ensuring we embed safeguarding and child protection best practices and continuously improve.
 - We are one of the few schools to have a full-time dedicated **Safeguarding Officer** who helps coordinate safeguarding across the College and is
 - **Monitoring and Accountability:** We have safeguarding goals supported by monitoring and evaluation strategies to ensure these goals are met qualitatively. Some examples include:
 - Safeguarding is a standard agenda item at every board and leadership meeting.
 - Our Boards review child safety data relating to all child safety organisation principles in every board report, so they always know what's working well and where we are focusing on improvements.
 - Our leadership team drives safeguarding as part of our everyday business. They manage child safety in their departments as accountable conduct, and monitor compliance with all the College's child safety expectations.
 - Going forward, our Safeguarding Staff will implement our annual internal child safety audits, and independent experts will review our child safety practices every two years.

The following will guide you through other actions in relation to the remaining Child Safe Organisation Principles. Each principle helps us strengthen key areas of practice. Collectively, they work together to create the foundations of a safeguarding culture.

2. Child Safety Policies

At Wesley College, we've created a set of strong child safety policies to guide how we deliver on our child safety expectations. These policies are more than just rules. They put child safety into action and help us keep students safe.



Child Safety Policies

- Our policies go beyond legal requirements. They drive child safety best practices, and uphold our moral and ethical safeguarding responsibilities.
- We make sure our policies are not just words on a page. All staff receive compulsory safeguarding and child protection induction and training, which includes education on our compulsory reporting processes should they ever be worried about a student or staff conduct.
- Our policies and procedures are integrated into staff management frameworks as an accountable requirement.
- We are in the process of making child safety policies easier for students and whaanau to access, including creating tailored versions, like this one, for our College community.
- Our new policy framework supports our core child safety policies being reviewed every two years, or sooner if there's a legal change or we see a better way of doing things.

You can view our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy https://wesley.ibcdn.nz/media/2025_08_28_1-policy-safeguarding-child-protection.pdf

A Child Safe Workforce

Child safety is now part of everything we do when it comes to hiring, training, and supporting our staff. This helps make sure everyone who works at or supports the College (whether paid, voluntary or contracted) understands their role in helping to keep students safe.



A Child Safe Workforce

- All staff position descriptions include safeguarding responsibilities, so expectations are clear and accountable.
- We exceed legislated safety check requirements by applying Safer Recruitment practices. Ensuring child safety is woven through every element of our recruitment, selection and onboarding processes.
- Staff management and review processes are being strengthened to ensure staff are supported and regularly reviewed on how they are upholding the College's child safety expectations.

3. Inclusive Safeguarding

Being a child safe school means creating a place where every student feels included, valued, and respected, no matter their background, identity, or culture. At Wesley, we value diversity and see exclusion as a breach of children's rights. That's why our approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) help to protect and uphold every student's right to be heard, supported, and kept safe. This means:



Inclusive Safeguarding

- Celebrating Aotearoa New Zealand as both a bi-cultural nation and a multicultural society.
- Creating learning spaces that are physically, socially, and emotionally safe.
- Demonstrating equity in promoting fairness and inclusion for all.
- Building cultural understanding and sensitivity into everything we do

4. Induction and Training

To ensure all staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to identify, respond to and report safeguarding and child protection concerns (including those that may relate to allegations against staff), all staff complete compulsory:



Induction and Training

- Child Safety Induction
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Training and Annual refresher training. All training covers the main Rs of child protection:
 - Recognising concerns (types of harm and the categories and possible indicators of abuse).
 - Responding to concerns safely (safe responses to the different types of disclosures).
 - Reporting concerns (within the College) and referring concerns (externally, e.g., to community or child protection services).
 - Recording concerns (ensuring effective record keeping and all practice is evidence based).
- Education events (these can be compulsory or optional), e.g. policy briefings, etc.

Staff with designated child safety roles or specific responsibilities (e.g., governance and leadership.) receive additional specialist child safety training specific to these roles and responsibilities.

5. Safe Services and Environments

At Wesley College, we're committed to making sure everyone is safe in all our services and physical and digital environments. Here's some of what we're doing to support the College being a child safe school:

- Our Risk Management Policy drives any risks that could affect students' emotional, physical or digital safety being prevented and mitigated.
- A dedicated Risk Management Committee reviews and manages College-wide safety risk and response strategies.
- We're developing better ways for students, whaanau, and staff to help us in identifying and reporting any risks.
- Our policies, including our Code of Conduct, cover both online and offline expectations.
- Governance actively monitor the College's risk management as part of their Board Reports and termly Board meetings.
- Facility, resource, and environment safety checks will be including in internal audits and independent external reviews.



6. Child-Focused Complaint Processes

To ensure our complaints policy and handling processes are child-focused, we have significantly reviewed our complaints policy and processes through a child rights lens and ensured they reflect the students' voice.

All feedback helps us to maintain the standards we expect and, critically, to remove any factors that may be creating risk. Hence, we are developing our culture to promote a positive reporting culture. We wish for everyone in our community to feel confident speaking up, knowing they will be heard and treated fairly.

We also understand that complaints processes can sometimes be a pathway for receiving child safety concerns. So, we've made certain our complaints and safeguarding and child protection systems work together when needed.

You can view our Complaints Policy

https://wesley.ibcdn.nz/media/2025_08_27_1-policy-complaints-0325-v1.pdf

If you make a complaint, we promise to:

- Take it seriously and respond fairly and promptly.



Complaints Continued.

- Ensure no one is treated unfairly or disadvantaged for making a complaint.
- Act with the best interests of the student in mind, including asking for their consent before sharing information (unless there is a safety risk or legal obligation).
- Always report any child abuse concerns to the appropriate child protection services.

7. Children/Young People Participation

The strongest safeguard is the student's voice. We are committed to empowering students and making sure they are active participants in developing our child safety practices and in creating a safeguarding culture.



We want them to feel safe, confident and supported in speaking up, and here are some of the ways we look to support their participation in our safeguarding journey:

- We are developing a Student Empowerment and Participation Policy to ensure the students' voice is part of everyday College life.
- We are working hard to create and maintain an empowering environment for students, e.g., through trusting and supportive relationships with staff and peers, through positive and encouraging experiences, through safe physical and digital environments, reinforcing child safety messaging, including through child safety signage, etc.
- We are child rights advocates and have supported all students to be educate on child rights. Ensuring they know of and understand their rights to provisions, participation, and protection.
- Students will be continuously supported in age and developmentally appropriate ways, to understand:
 - What harm can look like.
 - What Wesley can do to help keep them safe.
 - How they can support Wesley College being a safe College.

8. Family and Stakeholder Involvement

To be a child safe school means this must be a communal journey. It's not something we can achieve alone. It takes students, their whaanau, staff, and the wider Wesleyan community working together.

We're committed to making sure whaanau and Wesleyans feel informed, included, and involved in how we keep students safe. Here are some of the ways we are strengthening family and community involvement:

- The Safeguarding Officer has regular student focus groups where they explore different topics. This has included students feedback on how we can improve our communication with students and whaanau.
- We're committed to being transparent with whaanau about our child safety work, including where we need to strengthen our safeguarding culture and how whaanau and Wesleyans can help us.
- We are increasing our evaluation processes to creating opportunities for whaanau and Wesleyan feedback.
- We are looking to create initiatives like a Whānau and Wesleyan Advisory Groups, with whom we can consult and work with in shaping our child safety efforts.

If you would like to register your interest in being part of an Advisory Group, please contact the Safeguarding Officer on 027 333 4125 or safeguarding@wesley.school.nz



Family and Stakeholder Collaboration

9. Continuous Improvement

Keeping students safe isn't something we do once. It's something we're committed to embedding into everyday practices and conversations. We know that as the world changes, new risks can emerge, and our safeguarding systems must continue to grow and adapt.

Monitoring, evaluating and continuously improving our safeguards is critical and here are some of our strategies for helping to ensure we are in the best place possible to respond to any new challenges:

- We follow a living Child Safety Improvement Plan, which helps us maintain best practice standards, respond to new safety requirements (including Royal Commission recommendations), and address any identified risks.
- We identify case learnings from any child safety incidents to ensure our ongoing practice remains informed and improves.
- We regularly review our child safety policies and procedures and ensure these are informed by any case learnings, so they stay relevant and strong.
- We exceed legislative staff police check renewal timeframes by ensuring these are renewed every 2 years.
- We ensure all applicable professional registrations remain current.
- We are integrating frameworks for internal and external safeguarding audits and reviews, ensuring we consistently monitor the effectiveness of our safeguards and identify any development areas.
- We learn from child safety research and best practice examples, both in New Zealand and overseas.



Continuous Improvement

Worried about a Student?



10. Worried about a student?

We seek to prevent any risks of harm or abuse and welcome anyone with a concern to share that concern with us, whether about a student or a staff member. If something feels wrong or if you're unsure, it's always okay to speak to someone.

A. What to Look Out For:

Harm can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying (digital/online bullying).
- Exploitation of a child/young person, e.g. criminal or sexual exploitation.
- Family Violence (includes witnessing).
- Peer-to-peer problematic or harmful sexual behaviours.
- Self-harming or suicidal concerning behaviour.
- Being a College of Faith, we also give specific recognition to the risks of spiritual harm/abuse.

Essentially, all types of harm fall under one or more of the four categories of abuse, which in themselves are also recognised as harm and abuse:

<p style="text-align: center;">Physical Abuse:</p> <p>This is when a child/young person is hurt or put at serious risk of harm by someone's actions. It can include hitting, shaking, slapping, kicking, burning, or giving harmful substances like drugs or alcohol. Injuries might happen in one incident or over time.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Emotional Abuse:</p> <p>Emotional abuse affects how a child/young person feels about themselves. It can include ongoing criticism, rejection, threats, or making a child/young person feel unloved or worthless. It also includes overprotectiveness, setting unfair expectations, or ignoring a child's cultural identity. Emotional abuse can happen on its own or alongside other types of abuse.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sexual Abuse:</p> <p>Sexual abuse is when an adult or another young person uses power or influence to involve a child/young person in sexual activities, whether or not the child/young person understands or agrees. It can include contact or non-contact behaviours like showing sexual images, online grooming, or making inappropriate comments. It often starts with grooming, where someone builds trust to prepare the child/young person for abuse.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Neglect:</p> <p>Neglect is when a child/young person's basic needs aren't met. This could mean not providing proper food, clothing, medical care, supervision, emotional support, or education. Neglect often happens over time, but can also be serious after one incident.</p>

B. How You Can Report Your Concern:

At Wesley College, we encourage all students, staff, whaanau and College community members to report any concerns relating to a student's well-being and safety or that of others at Wesley College. This can be done by:

- Speaking to any staff member.
- Contacting our Safeguarding Officer (027 333 4125 or safeguarding@wesley.school.nz)
- Students can also use the Stymie App (a private, student-friendly resource) to report any concerns.
- Submitting a complaint via the Complaints Policy and Complaint Form on our [website](#), by emailing feedbackandcomplaints@wesley.school.nz, or by phone at 09 2370224.
- Contacting the School Chaplain (09 2370224 ext 854 or aliitasis@wesley.school.nz) for any student faith support needs.

Under [Section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989](#), any person, at any time, who believes a child/young person is at risk can also contact Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) or the Police (111 or 105 for non-emergencies) directly. This would include if a person was unsatisfied with decisions taken by the College and believed a child remained at risk. For any concerns relating to a child at Wesley College or College staff, in the first instance, we do encourage discussing these with our Safeguarding Officer (027 333 4125 or safeguarding@wesley.school.nz).

