



# CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

Child Safe Standards – Ministerial Order No. 870

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# Standard 1 – Strategies to embed a culture of child safety

## *Safeguarding Children and Young People - Zero tolerance approach to child abuse*

*Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College*

*(effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)*

*Information for our Community*

*(Reference to Child Safety Standard 1 – Ministerial Order No. 870)*

SGAE has a commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people by providing them with a safe and supportive environment. We instil within our community an organisational culture of child safety and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. We have values, expectations and standards that influence the behaviour of members of our organisation.

SGAE's community includes: board members, all staff, volunteers, contractors, parents and families, students and onsite visitors. (note: visitor acceptance to be included in sign-in book on entering premises)

They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people.

### **Purpose**

#### **Strategies to embed a culture of child safety:**

- Everyone connected to SGAE can help children be safe.
- We have zero tolerance for any abuse of children.
- We already have policies and processes in place to protect the care, safety and welfare of children. These are being continually strengthened to ensure a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.
- There are clear boundaries about how adults in our community may interact with children.
- Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.
- Understanding what 'zero tolerance' means to us.
- Procedures are in place to respond and report complaints of any form of child abuse.

### **Procedure**

- Staff members (including volunteers) will receive training and support to understand and carry out their responsibilities under the standards.
- Unsupervised contractors will be asked about their child safety arrangements as a condition of working with us if they work with children enrolled at SGAE / SGCC (or children can reasonably be expected to be present while they are in attendance). Acknowledgement notice included on Contractors sign in.
- Other people using our school facilities will be asked about their child safety arrangements as a condition of using our facilities if they involve children enrolled here.
- Persons attending the premises must sign in and out. Acknowledgement notice included on sign in.

#### **Roles and responsibilities for achieving strategies allocated by the school governing authority:**

- Code of Conduct form to be signed and dated by all involved and kept on file. A copy to be provided on request. Refer Standard 3.
- Attendance at staff and board meetings ensures all are kept updated on any changes or additions to the P&P's.

### Leadership in a child safe environment

- Our organisation acts to protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety embedded in our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of our organisation.
- A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. Our organisation fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.
- All staff and volunteers are aware of the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.
- We ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by our organisation. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection. **If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

### Governance in a child safe environment

- SGAE/SGCC takes preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our organisation is a paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

### Choose suitable employees and volunteers

- SGAE/SGCC takes all reasonable steps to ensure it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks (WCC) where required, face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers.

### Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

- SGAE/SGCC ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. In particular, leadership, managers and a child safety officer understand their responsibilities. A staff member who acts as our child safety officer within our organisation has knowledge of child safety issues, and can be a point of contact for our community who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

### Further information

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations)> Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,- guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)>.

## Standard 2 – A child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety

### *Safeguarding Children and Young People - Zero tolerance approach to child abuse*

*Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College*

*(effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)*

*Information for our Community*

*(Reference to Child Safety Standard 2 – Ministerial Order No. 870)*

Southern Grampians Adult Education (SGAE) has a commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people by providing them with a safe and supportive environment. We instil within our community an organisational culture of child safety and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. We have values, expectations and standards that influence the behaviour of members of our organisation.

SGAE community includes: board members, all staff, volunteers, contractors, parents and families, students and onsite visitors. (note: visitor acceptance to be included in sign-in book on entering premises)

They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people.

SGAE's approach to communicating relevant aspects of the child safe standards should reflect the differing roles, responsibilities and levels of involvement of various members of the SGAE community

### **Policy**

Our Policy provides an overview of key elements of an organisation's approach to child safety and confirms:

- the organisation's zero tolerance of child abuse
- the organisation's child safe processes and procedures, plus existing documents that include child safety considerations - for example, its reporting procedures and responsibilities, how to respond to an allegation of child abuse, human resources and recruitment practices, and risk management strategy and procedures
- the organisation's commitment to cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability
- detail expectations and requirements of staff and volunteers to ensure the protection of children, and the training and support the staff receive
- contact details for people to access information in relation to child safety, such as the child safety officer. A child safety officer is a person in our organisation who has knowledge of child safety issues, and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse.

### **Statement of commitment to child safety**

Our organisation has a commitment to child safety.

- zero tolerance for child abuse
- actively works to listen to and empower children/young people

- systems in place to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures
- committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

### Further information

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations) <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations)>.

Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)>.

# Standard 3 - Code of Conduct

## *Safeguarding Children and Young People*

### *Code of Conduct – Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College*

*(effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)*

#### *Zero tolerance of child abuse*

Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College (SGAE) has a commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people by providing them with a safe and supportive environment. We instil within our community an organisational culture of child safety and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. We have values, expectations and standards that influence the behaviour of members of our organisation.

### **Purpose**

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at SGAE against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other 'Codes of Conduct and Ethics' within our policy guidelines and professional codes relevant to compliance by our Organisation.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, board members at SGAE/SGCC are expected to actively contribute to a NSSSEP culture. They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people.

### **Acceptable behaviours**

All staff, volunteers, contractors and board members at SGAE/SGCC are responsible for supporting the safety of children/young people by:

- Adhering to our child-safe policy and upholding our statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children/young people from abuse or neglect
- Treating everyone in the SGAE/SGCC community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and community environment)
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children/young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse, or any child safety concerns to the organisations Co-ordinator of that program, Child Protection Officer or Senior Management
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/ren are safe
- Where a situation is not covered or defined seek advice from the Child Protection Officer and/or Executive Officer.

## Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors and board members must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes. This does not preclude other staff from assisting students with special needs who cannot manage for themselves
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the Child Protection Officer (CPO) or Executive Officer's (EO) knowledge and/or consent. (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring) accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate
- Have any online contact with a child (including by social media, personal email, instant messaging etc) or their family
- Use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account to have contact with children that are not your own
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or personal email addresses without the CPO or EO knowledge and/or consent
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- Photograph or video a child with a device that is not owned by SGAE/SGCC (for example, not to be taken on a personal device owned by staff member etc.)
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume alcohol or drugs at SGAE/SGCC or relevant events in the presence of children.

(note: Children – Children, young people under 18 years of age)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ confirm I have been provided with a copy of and understand the above Code of Conduct;

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Standard 4 – Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

*Safeguarding Children and Young People - Zero tolerance approach to child abuse*

*Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College*

*(effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)*

*Information for our Community*

*(Reference to Child Safety Standard 4 – Ministerial Order No. 870)*

SGAE has a commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people by providing them with a safe and supportive environment. We instil within our community an organisational culture of child safety and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. We have values, expectations and standards that influence the behaviour of members or our organisation.

SGAE community includes: board members, all staff, volunteers, contractors, parents and families, students and onsite visitors. (note: visitor acceptance to be included in sign-in book on entering premises)

They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people.

## **Policy**

SGAE fosters a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations. Good human resources practices are a way of reducing these risks.

Our organisation provides opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This assists staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

## **Child safety officer**

Employees and volunteers are supported through the appointment of an individual child safety officer, being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel.

This officer provides a contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with our organisation.

## **Training and induction**

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are encouraged to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff receive induction and ongoing training including child safety policies. Training and support also creates an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that our organisation meets its duty of care when providing services to children.



Our staff are committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, for example by signing our organisation's code of conduct.

Employees and volunteers working with children receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- our organisation's policies and procedures (including the code of conduct and child safe policy)
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
- cultural awareness training.

Training can be formal such as:

- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training meeting key objectives.

Training can also be informal such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events

## Supervision

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members should be present during activities with young people. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision.

## Further information

Further information on [child safe standards](#) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations)>.

# Standard 5 – Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

*Safeguarding Children and Young People - Zero tolerance approach to child abuse*

*Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College*

*(effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)*

*Information for our Community*

*(Reference to Child Safety Standard 5 – Ministerial Order No. 870)*

**Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse (note – this is publicly available on our website)**

- Procedures have been put in place to respond to and report complaints of any form of child abuse
- **Forming a belief on reasonable grounds**
  - A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk
- **Reporting a belief**
  - Mandated staff members (Staff, Teachers, Community) must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection
- Staff Members, **whether or not mandated**, need to report to the relevant staff their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.
- If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report

*Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures – for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse*

**These procedures do not:**

- Prohibit or discourage SGAE/SGCC community from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to our organisation
- State or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation
- Require staff/community to make a judgement about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
- Prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse

**If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:**

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.

- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your manager or your organisation's child safety officer, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

**If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern:**

- Explain that your organisation has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the organisation's management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

We are aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police.

When an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, we ensure a culturally appropriate response and this could include engaging with local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Advice on [communicating with people with a disability](#) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities)>.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

### Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about [failure to disclose](#) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)>

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

## Standard 6 – Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

### Safeguarding Children and Young People - Zero tolerance approach to child abuse

*Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College*

*(effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)*

*Information for our Community*

*(Reference to Child Safety Standard 6 – Ministerial Order No. 870)*

SGAE has a commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people by providing them with a safe and supportive environment. We instil within our community an organisational culture of child safety and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. We have values, expectations and standards that influence the behaviour of members of our organisation.

SGAE community includes: board members, all staff, volunteers, contractors, parents and families, students and onsite visitors. (note: visitor acceptance to be included in sign-in book on entering premises)

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#### **Procedure**

#### **Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse**

Risk management strategies have been developed within our existing policies:

- If SGAE/SGCC identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more of the organisations environment, the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the organisation will take to reduce or remove the risk (risk controls) *note: different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.*
- As part of our risk management strategy and practices, we monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of our risk controls
- We ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to members of the staff about:
  - Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
  - Child abuse risks in the organisations environment
  - The organisations current child safe standards

#### **Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation**

The organisation has strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending SGAE/SGCC
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- Resilience; and
- Child abuse awareness and prevention

Our organisation promotes the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user-friendly to young people.

## Standard 7 – Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

### *Safeguarding Children and Young People - Zero tolerance approach to child abuse*

*Southern Grampians Adult Education & Community College*

*(effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)*

*Information for our Community*

*(Reference to Child Safety Standard 7 – Ministerial Order No. 870)*

SGAE has a commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people by providing them with a safe and supportive environment. We instil within our community an organisational culture of child safety and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. We have values, expectations and standards that influence the behaviour of members of our organisation.

SGAE community includes: board members, all staff, volunteers, contractors, parents and families, students and onsite visitors. (note: visitor acceptance to be included in sign-in book on entering premises)

They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people.

#### **Promote inclusion and participation**

SGAE/SGCC is inclusive to all children and families. In particular, we ensure a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters
- the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring our organisation is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

#### **Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making**

We promote the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. For example, provide opportunities for children to express their views on your organisation's child safe policy or code of conduct, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through feedback sessions.

SGAE listens to children and takes them seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.