Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain to our school community the non-delegable duty of care obligations that all staff at Oakwood School owe to our students and members of the school community who visit and use the school premises.

Policy

"Duty of care" is a legal obligation that requires schools to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include personal injury (physical or psychological) or damage to property. The reasonable steps that our school may decide to take in response to a potential risk or hazard will depend on the circumstances of the risk.

Our school has a unique context that means at our VCAL campus at Chelsea we have a shared duty of care with Longbeach PLACE Inc, at our Pakenham campus we have a shared duty of care with Cardinia Shire, at our Capel Sound campus we have a shared duty of care with Eastbourne Primary School, and at our Mornington and Hastings Campuses we have a shared duty of care with Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. At these campuses we rely on other organisation's policies and procedures to manage common risks in the environment, including:

- Emergency management
- Emergency bushfire management
- Buildings, facilities and grounds

If our staff identify a risk relating to our students in these areas, they will take reasonable steps to reduce that risk. These steps will be in accordance with any relevant policy or procedure and will typically include informing the responsible organisation of the issue or incident for appropriate follow up action.

At our other campuses, the duty of care in the above areas is not shared with others and our school has developed procedures to manage these common risks. In addition, we have developed policies and procedures to manage common risks in all our school environments, including:

- Bullying Prevention
- Camps and Excursions
- Child Safe Standards
- Volunteers
- Working with Children and Suitability Checks
- Mandatory Reporting
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement
- Digital Learning (Internet, Social Media and Digital Devices)
- On-site supervision
- First aid
- Student medical conditions
- Managing and distributing medicine
- Restrictive interventions
- Visitors
- Anaphylaxis Management

Our school acknowledges we are required to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation.

Staff at our school understand that school activities involve different levels of risk, and that particular care may need to be taken to support younger students or students with additional needs. Our school also understands that it is responsible for ensuring that the school premises are kept in good repair and will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of members of our community suffering injury or damage because of the state of the premises.

School staff, parents, carers and students are encouraged to speak to the principal to raise any concerns about risks or hazards at our school, or our duty of care obligations.

External Providers

Staff at our school acknowledge that, as our duty of care is non-delegable, we are also required to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm when external providers have been engaged to plan for or conduct an activity involving our students. Our Visitors Policy and Camps and Excursions Policy include information on the safety and care of our students when engaged with external providers.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Included in enrolment packs
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Further information and resources

Department of Education and Training policies and resources:

- the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): Duty of Care
- the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): Structured Workplace Learning

Policy review and approval

Policy last reviewed	14 February 2025
Approved by	Paul Newson - Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2028