NEWHAVEN COLLEGE

Student Safety and Wellbeing - Recruitment and Employment Policy

Last Review: Apr 26 v.2	**Constructed / Reviewed by:** Principal
Next Review: Nov 26 (at least every two years thereafter or more frequently after a significant student safety incident)	**Approval Required:** Board
	Board Sign Off Date: 21 November 2024 **Implementation Date:** 20 January 2025

1 Statement of Context and Purpose

Newhaven College (the **College**) is committed to continuous improvement in the quality of the organisation through the recruitment of high calibre staff at all levels and maintaining a consistent recruitment and selection process that applies the principle of merit based selection. This consists of an assessment of overall level of skill, knowledge, experience and relevant qualifications, in accordance with the requirements of the Position Description. The methods used to assess the most suitable candidates may include but not be limited to, interviews, reference checks, classroom observation lessons and capability-based assessments including psychometric testing.

All policies, protocols and procedures flow from the College's vision: Inspire young people with knowledge, empathy and curiosity to engage in their world with confidence and a sense of purpose.

The College is committed to recruitment practices that do not discriminate and are in compliance with all relevant legislation, in particular, anti-discrimination and student safety laws. All persons undertaking a recruitment process must have sufficient understanding of these laws and must seek appropriate assistance from the College to ensure these obligations are met.

The College will recruit new staff fairly and on the basis of merit – that is, the person who is the best person for the job.

The purpose of this policy is to establish an employment practices framework that gives effect to these objectives.

2 Application

This policy applies to all Board members, the Principal, employees, volunteers, contractors, labour hire workers, secondees, homestay providers, approved student support providers and other authorised personnel who offer facilities or services to the College, or are required to perform functions on the College's premises, or at school-organised activities and events. Collectively, these individuals are referred to as '**staff**'.

3 Related Documents

Legislation

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Policies

Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Student Safety and Wellbeing - Staff Code of Conduct

Student Safety and Wellbeing – Raising and Responding to Concerns Policy

4 Overarching Recruitment Principles

The College is committed to applying the following overarching principles throughout the recruitment process:

Strategic alignment

The College's recruitment, selection and appointment practices will support the achievement of the College's strategic and operational objectives. Decisions to recruit should be made with regard to student safety, workforce planning and the goal of improving the performance and standing of the College.

Merit Based

The College merit based selection methods are to ensure recruitment processes deliver high quality staff and selection decisions that are fair, equitable, transparent and consistent. In this context, merit is defined as the skills, knowledge, qualifications, suitability, previous experience and personal attributes that relate to the requirements of the position.

Fairness

All those involved in the recruitment process should carry out their duties without bias or favouritism. Any potential or perceived conflict of interest between parties in the recruitment process should be declared to Human Resources and Panel Members and is to be avoided, where practicable.

Compliance

The College will comply with all relevant federal and state legislation in the recruitment and appointment of staff.

Equal opportunity

The College values equity and diversity and seeks to embody these values in its staff. The College welcomes applications from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, international people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

Efficiency and candour

The College recognises that timely decision-making can be critical in securing the best possible applicant, and all processes should be conducted without undue delay. All applicants should be treated with respect and communicated with in a timely manner throughout the recruitment process.

Student safety

The College takes a zero-tolerance approach to any behaviours that jeopardise student safety (including child abuse and reportable conduct). The College regards its student safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and strives to deliver an academic curriculum that promotes the College's values.

The College is committed to student safe recruitment as required by *Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Colleges and Boarding Premises.*

The College is also committed to ensuring that its recruitment of approved student support providers and homestay families is consistent with the requirements under Ministerial Order No. 1359 and the *Child Safe Standards.*

All applicants for positions involving student related work are informed about the College's student safety and wellbeing framework, including the Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Student Safety and Wellbeing - Raising and Responding to Concerns Policy, and the Student Safety and Wellbeing - Staff Code of Conduct). All staff (including but not limited to Board Members) are required to provide evidence of having completed compulsory student safety training and other training as required before commencing at the College.

5 Advertising the Position

Position Description

A position description is to be prepared for vacant positions. The position description will describe:

- The nature of the position.
- Essential duties and requirements.
- Key selection criteria (including personal attributes, skills, experience and qualifications, as well as any desired skills and abilities).
- The College's values.
- Where the role involves child-connected work, will contain:
    - A clear statement that sets out the position's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding student safety.
    - The essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to student safety required to fulfil the position.

Student safety screening

All applications will be responded to with an acknowledgement of receipt email.

Resumes will be screened against the position description so that assessments can be made of the applicant's suitability for the role.

Screening requirements will depend on the role that is being applied for, and whether the position is for an employee, volunteer, labour hire, secondee or contractor position.

The College will collect and keep a record of all relevant documentation obtained or sighted when screening a prospective staff member's (as defined earlier in this policy) suitability for a role at the College on its online management system, Synergetic (or otherwise, in hard copy or digital email file prior to being uploaded to the HR OneDrive in accordance with all applicable laws relating to privacy, including the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

Prospective staff

Suitable applicants for an employee position must:

- Hold, and provide the College with evidence of a current valid VIT registration or Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearance status (or similar check).
- Provide the College with proof of their personal identity (at least 100 points of identification is required).

- Have a current National Police Check or be willing to obtain one prior to, and/or during the course of their employment. Please note that a National Police Check forms part of the VIT registration process (whereas a WWCC clearance involves a narrower police check).
- Provide the College with proof of their professional or other essential or relevant qualifications for the role and other experience and attributes relating to student safety and wellbeing.
- Detail and provide to the College their history of student-connected work.
- Satisfy a reference check that addresses the applicant's suitability for the job and working with students.
- Be informed of, familiar with and agree to abide by the College's policies and student safety and wellbeing framework prior to commencing at the College.

Suitable applicants are invited to interview.

Applicants who are not selected for interview are notified by email.

Volunteers

All volunteers must agree to abide by the College's policies and student safety and wellbeing framework prior to commencing at the College.

All volunteers must sign in at main reception and present a physical copy of their WWCC to the receptionist on duty, who will take a copy of their WWCC verify it against the one previously provided to the College and record it in the College's system. This may occur upon request, or upon physical attendance to the College's premises.

Direct contact volunteers

A direct contact volunteer means a person who is involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and/or who could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of their volunteer service.

All direct contact volunteers are subject to student safety screening prior to their engagement by the College and must:

- Hold, and provide the College with evidence of, a current valid WWCC clearance status (or similar check).
- Provide the College with proof of their personal identity (at least 100 points of identification is required).
- Have a current National Police Check or be willing to obtain one prior to commencement.
- Provide the College with certified evidence of their professional or other qualifications relevant to the role.

- Detail and provide to the College their history of student-connected work.
- Where appropriate, satisfy a reference check that addresses the person's suitability to volunteer and work with children and other students (this requirement is a matter of best practice and is particularly relevant for large-offsite events, overnight excursions and camps).
- Comply with any additional screening requirements implemented by the College.

Indirect contact volunteers

An indirect contact volunteer means a person who is involved in providing support and services at the College whilst not directly assisting a child or specific group of students. For example, this would include a person assisting with College administration functions.

All indirect contact volunteers are subject to student safety screening prior to their engagement by the College and must:

- Hold, and provide the College with evidence of, a current valid WWCC clearance status (or similar check).
- Provide the College with proof of their personal identity (at least 100 points of identification is required).

Third party contractors

Third party contractor(s) include maintenance and building personnel, consultants, tutors, support providers, VET providers, sports coaches and cleaners who either attend the College, or other activities and events associated with the College, for the purpose of performing contracted services or provide the College with access to their facilities.

Where a third-party contractor could have direct or indirect contact with students during the ordinary course of providing their services to the College, they will be subjected to the equivalent screening processes for volunteers.

Interviews

Applicants are typically interviewed by at least two staff members and at least one interview is face to face (where possible).

Personal relationships do not influence our recruitment and selection process because recruitment and selection decisions are based on merit and not personal relationships.

The purpose of an interview is to provide and obtain information that will assist in making a decision about an applicant's suitability for the role.

Interview questions will include those from the following categories:

- Technical – used to determine the skills and qualifications of the applicant.
- Behavioural – past behaviour indicates future behaviour.
- Cultural – to assess a fit with the College's values of *Respect, Honesty, Empathy, Responsibility and Excellence,* and the College's vision: *Inspire young people with knowledge, empathy and curiosity to engage in their world with confidence and a sense of purpose.*

Interview questions also relate to the applicant's work history, skills and attributes as well as addressing selection criteria for the role. Interview questions are not discriminatory.

During the interview, applicants are provided information about the College, particularly, the College's focus on student safety and wellbeing.

The recruitment panel will make detailed notes of the interview.

Suitable applicants may be invited to attend a second interview with a senior member of staff.

Interviewed applicants who are not subsequently selected are notified.

6 Background Checks and Required Certifications

All appointments (including those involving child-connected work) will be conditional on the presentation of:

- Evidence that all screening checks required have been satisfied (refer above), which depending on the position, may include:
    - Evidence of current registration with the VIT.
    - A satisfactory National Police Check.
    - A current WWCC (or similar check).
    - Proof of personal identity (at least 100 points of identification).
- Proof of any professional or other qualifications (including if applicable, evidence that a teacher is suitably qualified and experienced to deliver a senior secondary course);
- Evidence of the person's history of work involving children and young people.
- Completion of psychometric testing and/or technical skills testing, which the College may require candidates to undertake from time to time.

The College will verify and keep appropriate records regarding the above information.

7 Reference Checking

The College will require at least two references from former and current employers of the applicant.

The College's reference checking process also involves enquiries about the applicant's suitability for working with students, or student—connected work, including in a school specific context.

Permission from the applicant to contact any nominated referees and to perform a full employment background check must be obtained during the interview.

All notes taken during the recruitment process (including the interview and reference check) will be placed on the staff member's file if the applicant is successful.

If a reference cannot be undertaken until the preferred applicant resigns from the current position, any employment offer will be made subject to the satisfactory completion of reference check.

8 Entitlement to Work in Australia

All applicants must provide valid documentation of their right to work in Australia. It is the applicant's responsibility to advise the College of visa expiry dates.

An applicant's citizenship or other immigration/visa status will be considered only as required by applicable laws and regulations for employment.

9 Pre-Employment Medical Requirements

Pre-employment health declarations

Legislation requires that the College must:

- Ask the applicant, in writing, to disclose any pre-existing injury or illness that could be affected by the nature of the proposed duties.
- Explain, in writing, to the applicant that a failure to disclose, or a misleading disclosure concerning pre-existing injuries or illnesses may result in a loss of entitlement to workers compensation, should the injury recur.

To meet this requirement, new staff (which include ex-employees returning to the College) are required to complete a pre-employment health declaration prior to commencing employment.

Pre-employment medical assessments

The College may require an applicant to undergo a pre-employment medical assessment.

This will occur if the College forms the view that it is prudent to independently confirm a prospective recruit's medical fitness to perform the duties that relate to the role that the

prospective staff member is applying for. Such an assessment will be conducted by a registered medical practitioner of the College's choice.

If the registered medical practitioner is unable to recommend employment of the applicant, the College may withdraw the offer of employment (if the offer has already been made).

10 Ensuring Student Safety Post Recruitment

Regular screening practices and obligations to disclose

The College will review the currency of VIT registration and WWCC clearances (or similar checks) annually (or more frequently as required).

All staff are required to immediately notify the College if their VIT registration or WWCC clearance (or similar check), is suspended, cancelled or otherwise under investigation.

All staff are prohibited from engaging in student-connected work in the absence of a valid VIT registration or WWCC clearance (or similar check).

Induction

The College requires all staff to undergo appropriate induction upon commencement at the College, including in relation to the student safety and wellbeing framework (including the Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Student Safety and Wellbeing - Staff Code of Conduct and Student Safety and Wellbeing - Raising and Responding to Concerns Policy).

Prior to commencing at the College, all volunteers, Board members and third party contractors must undergo appropriate induction, and be provided with the College's key student safety policies and related policies and procedures. The induction process for incoming Board members must also address the requirement for the College's governing body to:

- ensure that all people working at the College are suited to do so, and reflect the College's student safety and wellbeing values in practice;
- ensure that recruitment advertisements for staff have a clear statement that sets out:
    - the jobs requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding student safety and wellbeing; and
    - the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to the student safety and wellbeing.
- otherwise comply with its obligations relating to suitable staff and volunteers under clause 10 of *Ministerial Order No.1359*.

Once staff, Board members, volunteers, labour hire workers, secondees or contractors have completed the College's induction program (which will be relevant to the role in question), this will be recorded by the College and stored for record keeping purposes.

Supervision, monitoring and assessment

All staff

The College requires that staff act professionally, and in a way that embodies the College's commitment to student safety.

The College's student safety and wellbeing framework is available on the College's staff portal, and includes the Student Safety and Wellbeing - Staff Code of Conduct, Student Safety and Wellbeing - Raising and Responding to Concerns Policy, and the Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Staff will otherwise be subject to regular supervision, monitoring, performance reviews and assessment, to ensure their ongoing suitability for student-connected work. This will be managed by the Executive Team, and will include:

- Effective use of probation periods and annual performance reviews for staff (or where applicable, site or accommodation visits), which shall include an assessment of a staff member's continuing suitability for student-connected work.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers receive training on implementing the Student Safety & Protection Policy, building culturally safe environments for children and young people, recognising indicators of harm (including that caused by other children and young people) and responding effectively to student safety issues and concerns, and supporting colleagues who disclose harm.
- Ensuring staff (as defined earlier in this policy) receive training on the College's record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- Ensuring staff and, where appropriate, volunteers, receive ongoing student safety training that is tailored to the relevant needs of staff and volunteers, and factors in the complexity of child-connected work undertaken at the College.
- Ensuring staff are aware of, understand and respect student's individual needs and differences (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, overseas students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, LGBTQIA+ students and students who are unable to live at home).
- Monitoring staff to ensure their behaviour towards students is appropriate and to ensure compliance with the College's student safety policies.
- Appropriate levels of supervision for all staff, and in particular staff and volunteers who have direct contact with students.
- Acting on concerns which are raised in accordance with the Student Safety and Wellbeing - Raising and Responding to Concerns Policy, as applicable.

- Taking appropriate disciplinary action where a staff member is found to have acted contrary to the College's student safety and wellbeing framework.

In addition to appropriate training at induction, periodic refresher training will also occur for staff and relevant volunteers to ensure ongoing understanding of their legal and professional obligations. The purpose of the training is to equip staff and volunteers with the knowledge, skills and awareness required to keep students safe and otherwise provide information that is relevant with regard to the nature and responsibilities of the staff or volunteer's role.

This includes supervision, monitoring and assessment to ensure that teaching staff have the relevant skills, qualifications and experience to teach at the College.

At least annually, the College will ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to Board members and staff about:

- Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse and reportable conduct.
- Child abuse and reportable conduct risks in the school environment.
- The College's current student safety and wellbeing framework.

Relevant information and details of modules completed by each member of staff is recorded and stored for record keeping purposes.

The Principal will be responsible for keeping the Board informed (via the Principal's report or otherwise, periodic updates) regarding any matters which relate to a staff member's continuing suitability for student-connected work, or which otherwise concern the appropriateness of the College's arrangements for ensuring that staff engaged in student-connected work perform appropriately in relation to student safety (and in particular student safety).

11 Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy legislation impacts the entire recruitment process, as applicants may seek to access any information relating to their application. This may include any notes made on their resume, any notes made during their interview and any information recorded after speaking with their referees. All information obtained about an applicant as part of the recruitment process is confidential, and must not be distributed without authority of the College. Consent to a full employment background check should be obtained from the prospective staff member during the interview.

12 Consequences of a Breach of this Policy

The College emphasises the need to comply with the requirements of this policy. Any staff found to be in breach of the requirements of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

To properly implement this policy, all the College's staff must ensure that they will abide by this policy and assist the College in the implementation of this policy.

13 Communication and Implementation

This policy is available to staff as part of the College's and the Board's internal policies and procedures. Aspects of (and updates to) the College's student safety and wellbeing framework, including this policy will be addressed in the College's professional development updates, training programs, bulletins, and newsletters.

To properly implement this policy:

- It will be reviewed and endorsed on an annual basis.
- All staff, volunteers, labour hire workers, secondees and contractors must ensure that they abide by this policy and assist the College in implementing this policy.