

Family Violence Policy

1.0 Purpose

The Bendigo Kangan Institute (BKI) is committed to the safety of all students and staff, by providing a safe and supportive environment to those experiencing family violence. We believe those impacted and recognise that family violence can affect the lives of many individuals within our community. BKI is dedicated to ensuring those impacted feel supported, safe, and respected.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff/ employees, volunteers, contractors, service providers, labour hire workers, secondees and visitors across all BKI campuses and locations, where a person is affected by family violence, whether on or off campus. It also extends to family violence against an intimate partner or family member and to those who primarily care for children under the age of 18 of whom they bring onto BKI premises or learning sites.

3.0 Legislative Context

- *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic)
- *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement 2018
- Bendigo Kangan Institute PACCT Staff Enterprise Agreement 2022

4.0 Policy Statement

This policy provides practical advice and guidance to those responding to family violence and aims to empower those impacted to know how and where to get support at BKI and externally. BKI demonstrates a commitment to addressing family violence in all its forms and is aligned with the Multi- Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) practice guide and resources, along with the following principles:

4.1 Confidentiality

To minimise any potential barriers to a disclosure of family violence, all personal information will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with privacy laws. Personal information is only shared with appropriate staff members with consent, who can provide advice, support, safety planning, referral pathways and intervention where appropriate.

There are, however, limitations to confidentiality where it relates to the safeguarding of children under the age of 18 and when responding to immediate safety concerns for a staff member or student. Refer to the Family Violence Procedure (Staff) and Students) and the Child Safety Policy and Approval Authority: Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance

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Procedure for further advice on limitations i.e. confidentiality may be breached at the discretion of BKI and if there are immediate and significant safety concerns for a staff member or student, or if the person is under 18 years old.

4.2 Respectful, Sensitive and Safe Engagement

This policy acknowledges that family violence is a serious and widespread issue that disproportionately impacts women, young people, children, individuals with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, refugees and migrants. Therefore, all interactions with a staff member or student experiencing family violence must be respectful, trauma-informed, and aimed at addressing any safety concerns.

4.3 Safety Planning Strategies

BKI has a duty of care to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of all students and staff and is committed to creating an environment that encourages disclosures. This policy aims to empower those experiencing family violence to speak up, seek out support, engage in safety planning and receive assistance to address the impacts. Consultation with affected staff and students will be prioritised to determine the potential psychological and physical risks and hazards in the workplace or learning environment and on how to manage them, before implementing any agreed safety planning or adjustments to work or learning.

4.4 Targeted Support

BKI understands the negative and ongoing impact of family violence on work and learning. We are committed to providing specific support measures to maintain engagement, address safety concerns, and empower individuals. These measures include:

For staff:

- Paid family violence leave to manage the impact.
- Flexible work arrangements such as adjusted work hours or remote work to accommodate safety and wellbeing.
- Direct support and advice from the Family Violence Support Worker and People and Culture who are trained in responding to staff members experiencing family violence.
- Assistance in connecting with external support services for additional help and resources.

For students:

- Approved absence from learning to manage the impact of family violence.
- Flexible learning arrangements such as remote learning, flexible deadlines and rescheduling of assessments.
- Direct support and advice from the Student Services Team who are trained in responding to students experiencing family violence.
- Assistance in connecting with external support services for additional help and resources.

BKI is dedicated to making these processes as easy as possible and ensuring they are trauma-informed.

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4.5 Specialised Training and Prevention

This policy will promote awareness of family violence through ongoing education and training, while also fostering a culture of respect, non-violence, and equality. All training programs will be aligned with best practice and evidence-based guidelines in responding to family violence in the workplace and learning environment.

BKI is committed to educating and raising awareness about family violence, its potential effects, and how to manage risks, as well as supporting individuals adversely impacted. Training on gender equity and responding to disclosures of gender-based violence will be made available to key internal stakeholders, to ensure responses are central to the needs of the person. Further training will be focused on capacity building in staff to respond appropriately, reduce barriers and intervene in a trauma-informed way.

4.6 Commitment to Child Safeguarding Practices

Consideration must be taken with regards to children, including unborn children, exposed to family violence and the ongoing impact this has on their psychosocial development and safety. BKI is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation and adopts a zero-tolerance approach towards actions that place children at risk of harm, including exposure to family violence, as referred to in the Child Safety Policy and Procedure documents.

4.7 Feedback and Complaints

Any feedback or complaints from staff or students outlined in the scope of this policy should be directed to the BKI Feedback Policy (Compliments and Complaints) and responded to accordingly.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance	Custodian to the Family Violence Policy ensuring compliance with current legislation and the policy is reviewed and renewed as required. Provide guidance on the Policy.
Head of People and Culture	Custodian to the Family Violence Procedure and the Family Violence Safety Plan for staff, ensuring compliance with current legislation and the procedure is reviewed and renewed as required. Provide guidance on the procedure.
Head of Student, Support and Success	Custodian to the Family Violence Procedure and the Family Violence Safety Plan for students, ensuring compliance with current legislation and the procedure is reviewed and renewed as required. Provide guidance on the procedure.
Family Violence Support Worker	Take a lead role in responding to staff experiencing family violence. Ensure support provided is in accordance with family violence policies and procedures. Follow functions as indicated in the policy and procedure.

Approval Authority: Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance

Doc Custodian: Child Safety Officer

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Role	Responsibilities
Manager(s), Student Wellbeing and Support	Take a lead role in responding to students experiencing family violence. Ensure support provided is in accordance with family violence policies and procedures. Follow functions as indicated in the policy and procedure.
Manager, Organisational Capability	Ensure the development and implementation of a family violence specific training package, aligned with evidence based and best practice guidelines.
Child Safety Officer(s)	Follow functions as indicated in this policy and related procedures, with a specialised focus on children and young people under the age of 18.
Responding Staff Member	Follow functions as indicated in the FV policy and procedure documents.

6.0 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM)	The MARAM Framework is legislated under the <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008</i> (Vic). It aims to increase the safety and wellbeing of Victorians by ensuring that prescribed organisations can effectively identify, assess and manage family violence risk, and keep perpetrators in view and held accountable for their actions.
Family Violence (FV)	Family violence or FV, encompasses a range of abusive behaviours by one person towards another, including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as threats and coercion that establish fear for safety or wellbeing. It also covers actions that expose children to the effects of such behaviours, such as witnessing assaults or threats. The understanding of family violence impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is connected to the extended meaning of family, including the diverse kinship relationships.
Gender- based violence	Is based on an imbalance of power and is carried out with the intention to humiliate and make a person or group of people feel inferior and/ or subordinate. Gender violence can happen in both the public and private spheres, and it affects women disproportionately.
Gender equity	Is the fair and just distribution of benefits and responsibilities among people of all genders, addressing gender inequalities that limit access to opportunities. Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equity is a human right.

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Word/Term	Definition
Trauma	An event that involves exposure to actual or threatened death or serious injury, or sexual violence that has the potential to be traumatic. The trauma experienced can be physical or mental in nature and not everyone will respond in the same way.
Trauma-informed	Trauma-informed care is an approach to care that recognises the widespread impact of trauma and promotes environments that aid healing and recovery and that avoids re-traumatisation.
Safety Planning	Involves thinking about practical actions a person (and/or services) can take to be safer when living with family violence. The process looks at the current situation and assesses what steps and strategies can be implemented to mitigate the risk in the workplace or learning environment.
External support services	Is inclusive of services that specialise in providing family violence specific support to address the needs to the person impacted.
Affected Staff	Includes Bendigo TAFE and Kangan Institute employees whether full or part time, casual and/ or sessional, contractors or volunteers experiencing family violence.
Affected Student	Includes Bendigo TAFE and Kangan Institute students enrolled in study and/or learning experiencing family violence.

7.0 Supporting Policy Documents and Forms

Document Name
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Employee Code of Conduct Policy
Student Code of Conduct Policy
Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Information Privacy Policy
Records Management Policy
Child Safety Policy
Emergency Response Procedure

8.0 Version Control and Change History

Ver.	Issue Date	Document Custodian	Description of Change	Approval Authority
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Approval Authority: Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance

Doc Custodian: Child Safety Officer

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1.0	30/04/2025	Child Safety Officer	New Policy	Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance
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9.0 Document Owner and Approval Body

Document Custodian	Approval Authority	Approval Date	Next Scheduled Review Date
Child Safety Officer	Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance	30/04/2025	30/04/2026