

CHILD SAFETY

PURPOSE

Murrumbeena Primary School is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and the provision of an environment where young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

We have policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to adhere to our legal and moral obligations and to comply with our commitment to the Child Safe Standards.

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents/carers, contractors and volunteers who are engaged in activities with students at our school across a range of forums (e.g. camps, incursions, excursions, online, swimming programs etc).

Every person involved in Murrumbeena Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/ she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

AIMS

In its planning, decision making and operations, Murrumbeena Primary School will:

- ensure that all reasonable steps are taken so that students are safe from abuse including sexual abuse, and they feel safe at all times
- ensure everybody understands their legal and moral obligations towards child safety
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of all students ensuring they know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- empower students by involving them when making decisions that affect their lives, listening to their views and respecting what they have to say
- respect the diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- provide written guidance for staff and volunteers on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children and how to report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment to the appropriate authorities
- be committed to preventing child abuse through early identification of risks and removing and reducing these risks
- ensure robust human resources, recruitment and induction practices are in place for all staff and volunteers
- ensure that we collect, use and disclose information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy
- value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers
- have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support the staff and volunteers to achieve these aims.

Embedding an Organisational Culture of Child Safety (Standards 1 and 2)

• GUIDELINES

- In order to achieve the aims of this policy and address the Child Safety Standards, the following guidelines and procedures are implemented:

Responsibilities- Leadership

It is the responsibility of leadership to:

PROVIDE AUTHORITATIVE ADVICE

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
- Liaise with the principal and school leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety.
- Lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.
- Ensure the school has appropriate policies, procedures and a culture in place to safe guard against the risk of child abuse.
- Respond effectively if abuse is suspected or confirmed.
- Ensure risk management processes are in place that are effective in detecting and preventing child abuse.
- Monitor compliance to legislation and requirements of Ministerial Order 870.

RAISE AWARENESS

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
- Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.

TRAIN

Being authoritative in providing advice by:

- Keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years.
- Having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

Responsibilities- School Council

- Approve the 'Child Safety Policy' and 'Code of Conduct'

Responsibilities – Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- agree to conform with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Protection Policy (this policy) and Mandatory Reporting Policy, and comply with all requirements
- report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or DHHS Child Protection) and fulfill their obligations as mandatory reporters

(Refer Mandatory Reporting Policy)

- report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to the Assistant Principal or Principal
- provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Parents/Guardians and Students 18 years and over will:

- be aware of the Child Safety (this policy) and the related Mandatory Reporting Policy
- understand their obligations to report a reasonable belief of child sexual abuse to the police
- ensure that all personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Child Safety Code of Conduct (Standard 3)

- The school has a Code of Conduct for all teaching, non teaching, contracted adults (employed or engaged), volunteers and external program providers that sets the standards about the circumstances and ways people in the above roles are expected to behave and interact with children.
- The School Council Education Sub Committee has the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct and school council is required to ratify the Code of Conduct.
- School Council, staff, contractors engaged in child related work and volunteers are required to sign the Code of Conduct.
- The Code of Conduct is available, published and communicated to all relevant people.

School Recruitment, Supervision and Management Practices for a Child-Safe Environment (Standard 4)

Murrumbeena Primary School will ensure that:

- Position descriptions for all new teaching and non teaching positions advertised include the standard 'Child Safe Environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.
- A form of proof of identity and qualifications are recorded with the school.
- Potential staff will have their suitability for child connected work assessed and referenced as part of the recruitment process. This assessment will be through facilities such as the Victorian Institute of teaching, Working with Children Checks or any other appropriate facility.
- New staff will be provided with supervision or support arrangements in relation to assessing their suitability for child connected work.
- New staff have their history of work involving children recorded with the school.
- A reference statement to the Code of Conduct in relation to child safety is included in job descriptions.

Staff have an induction and ongoing training which will include the following child safety requirements:

- ✓ Legislative changes surrounding child safety
- ✓ Identifying, assessing and minimising risks of child abuse and detecting potential signs of child abuse
- ✓ Reporting suspected child abuse (including mandatory reporting requirements).

Refer to the following documentation for further information

- Induction Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Volunteer Policy

- Working with Children Check Policy.
- Contractor Induction Checklist

Procedures for Responding To and Reporting Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse (Standard 5)

- Murrumbeena Primary School recognises their responsibility to report allegations of actual or suspected child abuse in any form as part of mandatory reporting legislation.
- Murrumbeena Primary School's commitment to mandatory reporting will be outlined in the school's Mandatory Reporting Policy and the school's procedures to reporting and responding to all allegations of actual or suspected child abuse.

Identifying and Reducing/ Removing Risks of Child Abuse (Standard 6)

Murrumbeena Primary School will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. (Refer to Child Safety Risk Management Policy and associated risk management processes including DET online.)

Murrumbeena Primary School will have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical onsite environments, online environments, and offsite environments including camps, excursions, overseas tours, school sport activities, and events.

Refer to the following documentation for further information

- Child Safety Risk Management Policy

Promotion of Child Empowerment and Participation (Standard 7)

Murrumbeena Primary School will provide strategies to promote empowerment through student programs and parent education programs that:

- Outline simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse.
- Deliver age appropriate education about standards of behaviour for students, healthy and respectful relationships (including sexual), resilience, and child abuse awareness and prevention. These strategies include Family Life, DET Protect resources, PYP Curriculum and restorative practices.
- Provide support to children from culturally diverse backgrounds or with a disability and who may require specific care and support regarding child safety issues, and implement strategies to achieve this through effective risk management processes.

DEFINITIONS

In accordance with Ministerial Order 870 the following definitions apply:

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- The infliction on a child of physical violence, or serious emotional or psychological harm, or serious neglect

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing body for use by a child during or outside school hours including: a campus of the school; online school environments (including email and intranet systems); other locations provided by the

school for the child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School Staff refers to an individual working in a school environment who is directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority, a volunteer or a contracted service provider.

EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed in the context of the school accountability framework involving input from the school community through the School Council’s Education and Communication Sub Committee. It will be reviewed on a three-year cycle.

Related Documentation

RELATED DOCUMENTATION	REFERENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Code of Conduct ● Duty of Care Policy ● Equal Opportunities Policy ● Induction Policy ● Mandatory Reporting Policy ● Privacy Policy ● Staff Administration Handbook ● Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy ● Volunteer Policy ● Working with Children Check Policy ● Induction Policy ● eSmart Policy ● Visitors to the School Policy ● Contractor Policy ● Child Safety Risk Management Policy ● Camp Planning Documentation ● Excursions, Incursions & Events Planning Documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education and Training Reform Act 2006 ● Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment Act 2015 (Vic) ● Ministerial Order 870 ● Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 ● Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) ● Crimes Act 1958 ● DET School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care ● DET School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations ● DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework ● DET School Privacy Policy