

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

RATIONALE

Amsleigh Park Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Amsleigh Park Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse. This policy will apply to all members of the Amsleigh Park Primary School community and be inclusive of all school related activities, processes and procedures.

Our Child Safe Environments Policy: sets out the school's approach and commitment to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, vulnerable children, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Amsleigh Park 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.

GOALS

- ❖ To provide a safe and caring school environment that meet the needs of all children and addresses their safety and wellbeing as a priority for all staff, parents and students.
- ❖ To protect Children from harm.
- ❖ To ensure that our school complies with all the requirements of the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 870 and apply these requirements to all staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work with our students.
- ❖ To raise community awareness about the importance of child safety, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur or remain hidden.

GUIDELINES

- ❖ This Policy will apply to all staff, volunteers, contractors and whether or not they work in direct contact with children and young people. School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct.
- ❖ The Child Safe Environments Policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policy statements:
 - *Statement of School Philosophy*
 - *Child Safe Reporting Obligations Policy*
 - *Duty of Care Policy*
 - *Child Safe Environments Code of Conduct*
 - *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*
 - *Volunteers Policy*
 - *Yard Duty Supervision Policy*
- Our school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint. The school's *Child Safe Reporting Obligations Policy* outlines clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a young person who might be in need of protection.
- ❖ Our School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative

measures. The schools approach to Child Safety risk management can be found in the *Duty of Care Policy*. Amsleigh Park Primary School is committed to undertaking proper risk management process.

In its planning, decision-making and operations *Amsleigh Park Primary School* will:

- ❖ Appoint the Assistant Principal as the primary Child Safe Environments Officer and ensure that the role statement for this position clearly outlines the requirements for undertaking this vital responsibility;
- ❖ The Child Safe Environments Officer will be responsible for promoting the Child Safe Standards during **Safety Week** which is held in Week 5 of each school term (See Appendix B);
- ❖ Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility in meeting the requirements of this policy and other related policies and encourage any concerns to be raised, discussed and scrutinised
- ❖ Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- ❖ Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives through the Student Representative Council, classroom circle time, Tribes-Learning Communities and the application of the principles of student voice and choice in the classroom;
- ❖ Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
 - The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.
 - When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers) informed about progress.
- ❖ Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- ❖ Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children through the school's *Child Safe Environments – Code of Conduct*;
- ❖ Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- ❖ Include information about the Child Safe Standards in the school induction manual and processes and the School staff Handbook;
- ❖ Ensure all Volunteers meet the requirements of our school's *Volunteers Policy*;
- ❖ Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- ❖ Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- ❖ Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk;
- ❖ Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers;
- ❖ Provide ongoing professional learning for staff;
- ❖ The school will collect, use and disclose information about particular children and their families according to Victorian Privacy Laws;
- ❖ Facilitate opportunities for discussion in a range of forums across the school community including at; Staff meetings, Leadership Team meetings, School Council and the Parents and Friends Association;
- ❖ The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check;
- ❖ This school collects, uses and discloses 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 Statement;

Definitions related to Child Safety as outlined in Ministerial Order 870.

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
 - serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

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

School staff being: 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 (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

NB: It should be noted that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of any procedures outlined in this policy or through any other school process do not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

Failure to disclose is a criminal offence.

This offence applies to all adults (not just professionals who work with children) who:

- form a reasonable belief that that another adult may have committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age; and
- fail to report this information to Victoria Police.

Failure to protect is a criminal offence.

This offence applies to person in a position of authority within an organisation who:

- knows of a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16, under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (e.g. employee, contractors, volunteer, visitor); and
- negligently fails to remove or reduce the risk of harm

Local Guiding Principles:

- To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed by the School Council annually.
- It will also be reviewed through the school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
- The review will include input from staff, School Council, students, parents/carers and the school community.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

- ❖ Adherence to VRQA requirements for the Child Safe Standards
- ❖ Parent feedback as expressed through the Parent Opinion Survey
- ❖ Effective implementation of all policies that relate to Child Safety

STATUS:

Reviewed: March 2019

Ratified: April 2019

Next Review: April 2021

Date approved by School Council: Tuesday 23rd April, 2019

For further information about the Child Safe Environments Policy please contact the Principal of Amsleigh Park Primary School.

Appendix A:

All staff should be aware of these actions and refer to them as needed. Copies will also be displayed in the staff room, teacher offices, main entry foyer and on the school website.

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000** for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

- **GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Employee Conduct Branch
 - DET Security Services Unit.
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or school chairperson
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

ALL allegations of 'reportable conduct' **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

- **GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - Employee Conduct Branch
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - Diocesan education office
- **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

- **GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - DET Security Services Unit.
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or chairperson.

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

* A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- **not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- **how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

AREA

North Division **1300 664 9777**
South Division **1300 655 795**
East Division **1300 360 391**
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
West Division (Metro) **1300 664 9777**

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 12 78**.

CHILD FIRST

<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>

ORANGE DOOR

<https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence/the-orange-door.html>

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station **DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT (03) 9589 6266**

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT (03) 9651 3622

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE
Melbourne (03) **9267 0228**
Ballarat (03) **5337 7135**
Sale (03) **5622 6600**
Sandhurst (03) **5443 2377**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9825 7200

THE LOOKOUT

The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence. <http://www.lookout.org.au>

Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.



PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA Department of Education and Training

cccv catholic education commission of victoria

Respect Victoria

Appendix B:

Safety week is conducted in Week 5 of each Term. The following checklist outlines the requirements that must be undertaken during Safety Week in order to meet the Child Safe Standards.

Child Safe Environments Safety Week Checklist - 2019

Specific Action to be undertaken each term during Safety Week	Person Responsible	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
1. Assembly reminder – Safety Week - Reinforce message about a child's right to feel safe and secure both at school and outside school - Reinforce to students the importance of talking to a trusted teacher if they are not feeling safe and secure - Share Protect poster	Principal / Child Safe Environments Safety Officer				
2. Social Emotional Learning – Child Safe Environments in Focus - All classes to plan a minimum of one (1) session to teach children about protective behaviours. (Daniel Morcombe Curriculum)	PLC Leaders / Teachers				
3. Staff Meeting Briefing / Discussion - Child Safe Environments Policy in focus - Child Safe Standards – Code of Conduct in focus - Four Critical Actions in focus - Templates for staff to record any suspicions of abuse – E.g. Warning Signs of child abuse - <u>Addressing confidentiality</u> : in this instance it cannot be maintained and this needs to be appropriately communicated to the child e.g. I cannot keep this a secret.... - Protect handbooks & Resources in focus Term 4: Annual Child Safe Environments Policy Review / Code of conduct / Risk Management matrix (November SC Meeting)	Child Safe Environments Safety Officer				
4. Newsletter – Child Safe Environments in focus - Communicate Child Safe Environments Policy - Communicate and reinforce expectations of the Code of Conduct - Build community and staff awareness	Principal / Child Safe Environments Safety Officer				
5. Review of Risk Register - Review and amend as required.	Principal / Child Safe Environments Safety Officer				
6. Review of Child Safe Environments Safety Week checklist	Child Safe Environments Safety Officer				