

YARRA ROAD PS

Good Leadership & Governance in a Child Safe School

Child Safe Standard 1

LEADERSHIP IN A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities.

Yarra Road Primary School will act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We do this by providing a culture of child safety embedded throughout our school so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. This culture has been achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of Yarra Road Primary School.

Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. At Yarra Road Primary School, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

GOVERNANCE IN A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Leadership at Yarra Road Primary School takes preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership at Yarra Road Primary is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety, including the use of the tools provided by the education department. The leadership team takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, and are aware of child abuse allegations and risks, and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Yarra Road Primary School will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

Responsibilities for safeguarding of children

The Leadership Team and School Council have ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and are responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. They are also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The **school principal** (or **assistant principal** in the case of absence) will:

- Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff, students and volunteers
- Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff, students and volunteers
- Consult initially with a statutory child protection agency, such as DHS or ChildFirst
- Make a formal referral when required to ChildFirst or the police
- Deal with and investigate reports of child abuse
- Ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct
- Ensure that all adults within the Yarra Road community are encouraged to report suspected abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures
- Ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety)
- Provide support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities, including mandatory reporting training for all teaching staff
- Nominate a **Child Safety Officer** to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters

The named responsible person has the following core areas of responsibility:

- Develop appropriate policies and organisational practices to safeguard all children that the school has contact with
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns
- Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when necessary

The Leadership team, including the Child Safety Officer, must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities
- In case of any concerns about the welfare of a child, questions about this policy, or questions / concerns about keeping children safe at YRPS, queries should be directed to a member of leadership who will follow up with the appropriate actions, as outlined in this policy

All staff/volunteers/contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Yarra Road's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to leadership, as well as the relevant authorities, and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000

IDENTIFY AND ANALYSE RISK OF ABUSE

Yarra Road Primary School adopts an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our school identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

Please note: The Department of Health and Human Services provides risk management tools for school use.

IN ITS COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS, YARRA ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL HAS:

DEVELOPED A CHILD SAFE POLICY

This child safe policy outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

DEVELOPED A CODE OF CONDUCT

Yarra Road Primary School has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) developed the Code of Conduct as required by Part 2.6 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Code of Conduct is a set of principles or standards for the behaviour and conduct of all Victorian teachers in the Victorian Government Teaching Service and the non-Government sector.

The following principles are of particular relevance when using social media tools:

Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.

Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels.

CHOSEN SUITABLE EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Yarra Road Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, it will ensure it includes:

- Selection criteria in job descriptions
- Police record and identity checks
- Working with Children Checks where required
- Face-to-face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager

SUPPORTED, TRAINED, SUPERVISED AND ENHANCED PERFORMANCE

Yarra Road Primary School ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. In particular, the principal, leadership team and the child safety officer understand their responsibilities. Our child safety officer at Yarra Road Primary School is the person who has knowledge of

child safety issues, and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

PROMOTED INCLUSION

Yarra Road Primary School is inclusive to all children and families. In particular, we establish a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring that Yarra Road Primary School is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

EMPOWERED AND PROMOTED THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN DECISION-MAKING

Yarra Road Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. Yarra Road Primary School provides opportunities for children to express their views on their own code of conduct, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through Junior School Council meetings and feedback sessions.

Yarra Road Primary School endeavours to listen to children and take their ideas or concerns seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Related Policies:

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Personal Liability of School Employees](#)
- [SERS Insurance Claims and Settlement Process](#)
- [Volunteer Workers](#)
- [Risk Management](#)
- [Duty of Care.docx](#)

Department Resources:

- The [PROTECT](#) Portal - provides further information on how schools can meet their obligations under the Child Safe Standards
- [ISP Quality Standards and School Resources](#) - see: International Student Program Quality Standards for Schools, Quality Standard 5 - Younger Students

This Policy was last ratified by School Council in 2017