

YARRA ROAD PS

Child Safe Commitment

Child Safe Standard 2

POLICY

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY:

- Yarra Road Primary School is committed to child safety.
- We want all children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect ALL children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of ALL children.
- Yarra Road Primary School has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- Yarra Road Primary School supports and respects all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

AIMS:

- To commit to an organisational culture of child safety that takes into account the diversity of all children
- To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse through a child safe code of conduct.
- To prevent child abuse within Yarra Road Primary School through sound staff selection, supervision and management practices
- To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
- To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Yarra Road Primary School is dedicated to child safety and this document has been drawn up to meet the standards set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

Our Student Wellbeing and Child Safety philosophies recognise that:

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of their level of dependency or their communication needs
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective e-smart policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers, to a level which is appropriate to the circumstances of their engagement with us
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately

IMPLEMENTATION:

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to our code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

RECRUITMENT

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We follow the Department of Education and Training selection criteria which clearly demonstrates our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We welcome applications from a diverse range of people.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](#) website [Click here](#) for further information and the school's 'Working with Children

Policy.' [Click here](#)

We carry out reference and VIT record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. We retain the checks on people we employ as part of the record process.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

FAIR PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as a school take.

PRIVACY

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.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our school will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

RISK MANAGEMENT

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed every three years and following significant incidents if they occur.

This Policy was last ratified by School Council in 2017