



# CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

|                                  |   |    |
|----------------------------------|---|----|
| <b>Background</b>                |   | 2  |
| <b>School Commitment</b>         |   | 3  |
| <b>School Policy- CHILD SAFE</b> |   | 4  |
| <b>Appendices</b>                | <b>Title</b>  |    |
| 1                                | Child Safety Definitions  | 9  |
| 2                                | Child Safety Code of Conduct  | 10 |
| 3                                | Child Safety Strategies   | 12 |
| 4                                | Child Safety Team- Roles and Responsibilities                       | 14 |
| 5                                | Child Safety Incident report Template                               | 15 |
| 6                                | Child Safety-Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse      | 17 |
| 7                                | Child Safety –Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Practices | 19 |
| 8                                | Child Safety- Strategies to reduce or Remove Risks of Child Abuse   | 21 |
| 9                                | Related Policies and Documents-Resources and References             | 23 |

## OBERON PRIMARY SCHOOL -CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

### BACKGROUND

- The 2013 Betrayal of Trust report by a Victorian Parliamentary committee has made recommendations to all Victorian Schools.
- For registered schools, Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out the specific actions they must take to meet these requirements.
- From the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2016, the new Child Safe Standards come into effect.
- Oberon Primary School is committed to implementing the Child Safe Standards.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, schools must have:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including effective leadership arrangements
2. a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
3. a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

**Child Safe Web Page** - <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html>

### Ministerial Order No. 870

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf>

**NOTE:** This information should be read in conjunction with the school's other policy documents. This advice does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the school.

The VIT provides clarity regarding professional behaviour expected of teachers at all times. The code specifies behaviour unacceptable for a professional relationship between a teacher and a student. "Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not"

# PROTECT

THE  
EDUCATION  
STATE

VICTORIA  
State  
Government

Education  
and Training

- Our school is committed to child safety.
- We want 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.
- We have **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.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from a 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.



## CHILD SAFE POLICY

### PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The child safe environments policy sets out the school's approach 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.

The school's strategies take into account the diversity of the children attending the school, and their particular vulnerabilities. For example, children with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This policy applies to all school environments (inclusive of physical and online environments).

### SCOPE & AUDIENCE

- This policy outlines a range of preventative, proactive strategies that promote a shared responsibility to develop an open and aware culture of child safety.
- This policy will apply to all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.
- This policy will apply across the range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours (where school activities have been organised).
- All partner organisations (eg-camp or OSHC providers) will be made aware of the policy and the school's underlying philosophy towards the care of children.

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT & PRINCIPLES

The Oberon Primary School Statement of Commitment is:

- *Oberon Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.*
- *Oberon Primary School has **zero tolerance for child abuse.***
- *Oberon Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. 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.*
- *Every person involved in Oberon 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.*

In addition, the Statement of Commitment *Oberon Primary School* has principles for child safety.

“In its planning, decision-making and operations *Oberon Primary School* will

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
- 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.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES -IMPLEMENTATION**

Procedures and Guidelines outlining school’s approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below.

### **CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

#### **1. A Child-Safe Culture**

- Embedding an organisational culture of child safety is critical to reducing the risk of child abuse in schools.
- Organisational culture can be defined as a set of values, expectations and standards that influence the behaviour of the members of an organisation.
- The organisational culture defines what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by people within the organisation.
- To successfully embed a culture of child safety, a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse** is led by the school council. This commitment is shared, openly and transparently, by all members of the school community, including staff (including school employees, contractors and volunteers), parents and families, visitors and children.
- The Oberon Primary School community is informed about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities.
- The school’s expectations with respect to child safety are published and displayed in prominent locations in all school environments. For example, school buildings, website and school documentation.
- The school’s culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.
- Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/Code of Conduct
- The principal and student wellbeing coordinator will lead the management of the child safe standards at Oberon Primary School.

## 2. Human Resources Practises and Training

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

Our school 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 and volunteers 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 school'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 the **Code of Conduct – Appendix 2 on page 9**) 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.

- School staff (including contractors and volunteers), are inducted/trained in the school's child safety strategies.
- 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.
- Visitors to the school are made aware of the schools expectations regarding child safety.

## 3. Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers 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.

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.

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 organisation 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.

- The 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 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<sup>1</sup>, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

#### **4. Risk Reduction and Management**

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. 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 and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

- The 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.

#### **5. Listening to Children**

- The children at Oberon Primary School are encouraged to openly discuss any concerns related to child safety.
- The children informed about child abuse, the forms it can take, preventative strategies and how to report any occurrences (eg-Kids Matter, Wise Child, Brave Hearts programs).
- The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/ care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers 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 parent/carer) informed about progress.

#### **6. Confidentiality and Privacy**

- 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 Department of Education Privacy Policy (see Appendix 8 for a link to this policy).
- 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. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 5 on page 14 of this document.

**POLICY EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school review cycle or as legislative changes occur and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute.

Date Ratified at School Council -----

Next Review Date-----

**Appendices- Further Information**

| <b>Appendix</b> | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Page</b> |
|-----------------|---|-------------|
| 1               | Child Safety Definitions  | 9           |
| 2               | Child Safety Code of Conduct  | 10          |
| 3               | Child Safety Strategies   | 12          |
| 4               | Child Safety Team- Roles and Responsibilities                       | 14          |
| 5               | Child Safety Incident report Template                               | 15          |
| 6               | Child Safety-Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse      | 17          |
| 7               | Child Safety –Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Practices | 19          |
| 8               | Child Safety- Strategies to reduce or Remove Risks of Child Abuse   | 21          |
| 9               | Related Policies and Documents-Resources and References             | 23          |

## APPENDIX 1

### CHILD SAFETY STANDARD DEFINITIONS

- Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

#### **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.

## **APPENDIX 2 CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT**

Oberon Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Oberon Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Oberon Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

### **Acceptable behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's Child Safe Policy .
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are concerned about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or Student Wellbeing Coordinator
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

## Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

### **APPENDIX 3 CHILD SAFETY STRATEGIES**

The child safety strategies implemented at Oberon primary School are listed below.

#### **School Council**

- The school council communicates that it has **zero tolerance of child abuse** (in any form).
- Child safety is tabled as an item for discussion at meetings of the school council.
- Child safety strategies are developed and enhanced through ongoing review of the effectiveness of practice.
- An appropriate reporting process is in place for child abuse that includes overseeing outcomes.
- The school council oversees the implementation and improvement of child safety strategies.
- The school council communicates with the school community about the school's child safety strategies and their implementation.

#### **School staff (includes contractors and volunteers)**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Code of Conduct.

- Ensuring awareness of the child safety strategies and the allocated roles and responsibilities.
- Criminal history checks and confirming currency of Working with Children Check/Victorian Institute of Teaching registration.
- Induction in child safety for all staff and visitors.
- Child safety is tabled as an item for discussion at staff meetings.
- Staff are trained to detect inappropriate behaviour.
- Staff are expected to report inappropriate behaviour.
- Positive behaviours are recognised and encouraged.
- Foster a culture of openness with an approachable and supportive school leadership team.

#### **Children**

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

In addition-

- Children are made aware of how to detect and report inappropriate behaviour.
- Children are encouraged to report inappropriate behaviour.
- The school has nominated contact persons that children can approach in relation to child safety.
- The school has child safety reporting procedures.
- The school provides counselling and other resources to support children.

**Environment**

- The school has child safety strategies in place for all physical school environments, that include:
  - regularly reviewing the physical environment to ensure all risks are identified and managed
  - assessing new or changed physical environments for child safety risks
  - supervising or monitoring activities.
- The school has child safety strategies for its online environments (eg intranets, online learning systems, social media) including:
  - clear boundaries of roles between staff and children
  - proactive strategies to detect inappropriate behaviour such as online searches (Google, Facebook etc).
- Visitors are appropriately screened, supervised and made aware of the school's child safety strategies.

## **APPENDIX 4 ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Key activities of the school child safety team and the officer/leader role**

The team and school leader responsible for child safety has sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate), to undertake the role effectively.

The Child Safety Team consists of-

- School Leadership Team including the school principal
- Student Wellbeing Manager (Child Safety School Leader)

One staff member has the role of the Child Safety Officer however all members of the team have a major role in fulfilling the responsibilities of the Child Safety Standards.

### **Broad areas of the role of Child Safety Leader are to:**

#### **1. 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.

#### **2. 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 Mandatory Reporting 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.

#### **3. 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.

## APPENDIX 5

**Oberon Primary School  
CHILD SAFETY Incident Report**

Source-

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources>

(Child safe standards toolkit: resource seven)

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This report template can be used by a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern in the school. Staff, Visitors or Volunteers can also use this resource to record disclosures.

All incident reports must be stored securely.

**Incident details**

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date of incident:                    |  |
| Time of incident:                    |  |
| Location of incident:                |  |
| Name(s) of child/children involved:  |  |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved: |  |

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

**Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

- (Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No  Yes, Aboriginal  Yes, Torres Strait Islander

- Please categorise the incident

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Physical violence                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexual offence                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serious emotional or psychological abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serious neglect                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Please describe the incident**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| When did it take place? |  |
| Who was involved?       |  |
| What did you see?       |  |

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Other information</b> |  |
|--------------------------|--|

**Parent/carer/child use**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Date of incident:</b>                    |  |
| <b>Time of incident:</b>                    |  |
| <b>Location of incident:</b>                |  |
| <b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>  |  |
| <b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</b> |  |

**Office use:**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Date incident report received:</b>  |  |
| <b>Staff member managing incident:</b> |  |
| <b>Follow-up date:</b>                 |  |
| <b>Incident ref. number:</b>           |  |

**Has the incident been reported?**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Child protection</b>                      |  |
| <b>Police</b>                                |  |
| <b>Another third party (please specify):</b> |  |

**Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?**

- *(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)*

Yes

No

**Disclaimer**

This document provides general guidance only on the child safe standards. The Department of Health and Human Services does not guarantee that the examples provided in the document are sufficient for the purposes of an organisation's compliance with existing regulatory or government funding requirements.

## APPENDIX 6

### RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

#### What to do when an allegation of child abuse is made

Source- *Child safe standards toolkit: resource six*

The child safe standards require schools to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This guideline is designed to provide guidance on what to do if a child discloses an incident of abuse, or if a parent/carer raises a concern or allegation of abuse which may have taken place in our school.

#### If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your manager or your organisation's child safety officer/champion, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

#### If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern

- Explain that your organisation has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the organisation's management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

Some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. Staff at our school will be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, we will ensure a culturally appropriate response. For example, engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters. Advice on [communicating with people with a disability](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities)>.

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

### Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about [failure to disclose](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)>

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

More information about [mandatory reporting](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting) is available in the *Child protection manual* <[www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting)>.

**Mandatory reporters** (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first)>.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

Further information about [failure to protect](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)>, and the Department of Health and Human Services website>.

## APPENDIX 7

### SCHOOL STAFF SELECTION, SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Strong human resources practices promote child safe school environments and reduce the risk of child abuse. Child Safe Standard 4 (Standard 4) requires schools to use policies and procedures for recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that support a child safe school environment.

In preparing for Oberon Primary School will:

- Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the standard 'Child Safe Environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.
- Identify the actions the school proposes to take, per Standard 1, to promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3 [this is to address Requirement 1 for existing staff].and articulate the timeframe for this.
- Determine the timeframes for the school governing authority to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2].
- Note that further advice on practices to ensure that principals are satisfied that an external applicant meets the Standards prior to the applicant's employment are forthcoming.

**Note -that further advice on Induction requirements and Performance and Development requirements will be developed by the Department of Education in 2016 to ensure schools fully meet Requirement 5 of Standard 4.**

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 4:

1. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
  - a) the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
  - b) the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
2. All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the Code of Conduct).
3. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
  - a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
  - b) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
  - c) the person's history of work involving children; and
  - d) references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
4. The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in steps (3)(a) to (3)(d), above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
5. The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
  - a) the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
  - b) monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.
6. The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Explanatory note: To be 'satisfied', it is not necessary that the school governing authority make each decision about the selection and supervision of school staff engaged in child-connected work. The school governing authority needs to be satisfied about the appropriateness of the school's arrangements that would regulate or guide other people who make such decisions for or on behalf of the school about child safety matters and child-connected work.

## APPENDIX 8 STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE OR REMOVE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE

Child Safe Standard 6 (Standard 6) requires schools to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

A child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety.

### In preparing for compliance schools are expected to:

- **Assess, identify and document** the school's risks in relation to child safety, and plan and document risk management strategies where necessary.
- **Incorporate** risk management actions and responsibilities in the **Action Plan** as described in Standard 1.
- **Identify** the actions the school proposes to take, per Standard 1, to ensure a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 6:

*“(1) The school governing authority must develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environments.*

*(2) The school’s risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.*

*(3) If the school governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).*

*Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.*

*(4) As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school governing authority must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.*

*(5) At least annually, the school governing authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:*

- a) individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;*
- b) child abuse risks in the school environment; and*
- c) the school’s current child safety standards.”*

### Process for identifying and reducing or removing risks of child abuse

While risk management assessments and strategies will vary for each school, managing risk typically involves the following steps and considerations.

1. Identify the school’s child safety risks across the range of school environments (including excursions, camps, online).
2. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures or internal controls.
3. Assess and rate the school’s child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.
4. If the risk rating is more than the ‘acceptable level’, identify further risk management strategies through additional controls or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then re-assess the risk.



## APPENDIX 9

### RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

#### Resources and References

- [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation*, Version 2.0.
- (DET) Department of Education and Training (2016) *School Policy Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy*, and associated tools:
  - School risk register which can be edited and has automatic tools embedded is available, see: [Risk Management in Schools – Risk Register](#).
  - Subordinate risk registers for specific activities such as overseas travel/excursions or projects, see: [Risk Management in Outdoor Education – Education Outdoor tools](#).
  - Online risk management module: [Risk Management - Online Risk Module](#)
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module (log-in required)
- State of Victoria (2010) *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children’s Services and Victorian Schools*.
- Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*, Ministerial Order No. 870.
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (2016) *Child Safety Standard 6: Child safety risk management strategies*
- (DET) Department of Education and Training (2016) *School Policy Advisory Guide*:
  - DET School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>
  - DET School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/childprotection.aspx>
  - DET School Policy & Advisory Guide-Child Wellbeing and Safety  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/wellbeing.asp>  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/safetymgt.aspx>
  - DET School Policy & Advisory Guide- Privacy Policy  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/requestinfo.aspx>
- Related Oberon Primary School Policies-
  - Bullying and Harrassment
  - Duty of Care
  - E-Smart Policy (ICT)
  - Mandatory Reporting
  - Student Wellbeing and Welfare
  - Working with Children

This policy has been informed by information from-

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)

### Further information

- Further information on [child safe standards](#) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations)>.
- Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](#): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)>. In particular, [An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](#), has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/___data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)>
- **Note for registered schools:** a forthcoming Ministerial Order under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* will contain the minimum actions that schools must take to meet each of the child safe standards. There will be a lead in time before regulation will commence to allow schools time to prepare. The Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority will provide information and materials specifically for schools to assist with capacity building and compliance.
- **Registered schools** can contact the Department of Education and Training: [child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- Early childhood services operating under the *National Quality Framework* or *Children's Services Act 1996* should contact: [licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)
- Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

### Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and ratified at the start of each school year.

This policy was ratified by the Oberon Primary School Council on 25/02/2020

Next review date: February 2021

### Policy History

Policy prepared by Bronwyn Robertson and Andrew Augerinos

Ratified by OPS Council:

- 25/02/2020
- 02/04/2019