



Child Safe POLICY

Rationale

Cardinia Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school.

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards commenced on 1st January 2016 for most organisations working with children, with the aim of promoting cultural change in the way organisations manage the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The Child Safe Standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

The Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations that provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

The Child Safe Standards

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

Standard 1

Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

Standard 2

A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

Standard 3

A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

Standard 4

Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

Standard 5

Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Standard 6

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.

Standard 7

Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe.

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 means 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);
- a minister of religion.

Aim

Cardinia Primary School is committed to providing a child safe organisation where children are safe and feel safe. This policy also provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope

This policy will apply to all school staff, volunteers and contractors, whether or not they work in direct contact with children.

This policy will apply across the school environment.

Implementation

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

- Cardinia Primary School has a *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*.
- The *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety* will be made available on the school's website and will be displayed at strategic locations around the school.

Policy and Procedures

- Cardinia Primary School has policies, procedures and training in place to implement the Child Safe Standards at our school.
- Policies in place include a *Child Safe Policy*, a *Child Safe Reporting Obligations Policy*, an *Inclusion Policy* and a *Duty of Care Policy*. The school also has a *Child Safety Code of Conduct*. All of these documents are available on the school's website.

A Child-Safe Culture

- Our school:
 - * Supports and respects all children, as well as our staff, volunteers and contractors;
 - * Is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children;
 - * Has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently in accordance with our policies and procedures;
 - * Is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks; and
 - * Encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Code of Conduct

- School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children from abuse and neglect.
- The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- All staff, volunteers and contractors must agree to abide by the school's Code of Conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct when working with children.

Human Resources Practices and Training

- 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 from abuse and neglect.
- All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo a National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.
- Any inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, volunteer or contractor will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

- The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child who may be in need of protection.
- Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to 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 these concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.

- The school has a *Child Safe Reporting Obligations Policy*, which is available on the school's website.

Risk Reduction and Management

- The school believes the wellbeing of children is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.
- The school has completed a Child Safe Risk Assessment, which has been presented to School Council for endorsement.

Listening to Children

- The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children 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.

Confidentiality and Privacy

- Cardinia Primary 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 Schools' Privacy Policy (DET).

References

- School Policy and Advisory Guide
[Child Safe Standards](#)

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years, as deemed necessary or following significant incidents if they occur.

Ratified

This policy was ratified by School Council on 5th September 2018.