

EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY

Child Safe – Standard 1

Rationale

Governance arrangements, underpinned by a firm commitment from Aireys Inlet Primary School's school leadership team and our school values of Respect, Cooperation and Personal Best are the starting point to embedding a culture of child safety at our school. Strategies that seek to prevent harm and neglect (including physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, racial and cultural or religious abuse), all contribute to a child safe culture. It is therefore critical that child safety is part of the everyday thinking and practice of all within our school community. It is important to maintain the momentum of a child safe culture by monitoring our performance and checking that child safety continues to be prominent in the school's governance and planning.

Background

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015* to introduce seven child safe standards (the Standards) into law. The Standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria.

[Ministerial Order No. 870](#) provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 1:

"The school governing authority must:

- (a) develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school;*
- (b) allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;*
- (c) inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;*
- (d) put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and*
- (e) periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies."*

Implementation

A) Development of strategies to embed a culture of Child Safety at the school

- The School Council is responsible for ensuring a culture of child safety is embedded at the school.
- Children, staff and school community members are informed of what to do if they observe or are subject or abuse or inappropriate behaviour.
- Members of the school community, including teachers, parents and students, are empowered to discuss child safety and raise concerns about child abuse through our Wellbeing and Leadership school teams.
- Child Safety is to be embedded in our school vision, mission and strategic direction as they are reviewed.
- All staff and volunteers are supported to consider the safety of all children, including the recognition of 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.
- The school recognises that young children and those with a disability are at greater risk of abuse or exploitation and staff will provide greater levels of supervision and support.

- Child Safety conversations are regularly scheduled in our meeting planning for whole Staff Meetings and Professional Learning Community conversations.

B) Child Safety Roles and Responsibilities:

- The school has designated the Wellbeing Team as the key people to undertake child safety roles and to ensure school responsibilities are being carried out. The team includes the Principal, Leading Teacher, teachers, and support staff including the school Welfare Officer.
- These Child Safety roles, including contact details, will be clearly communicated to the school community via parent information nights, level handbooks, newsletter articles and website information.
- We will build the child safety capacity of the school staff by making training available and providing ongoing induction and training for all staff and volunteers in child safety including how to recognise and respond to child abuse.
- The Principal will act as the schools' Child Safety Officer.

Child Safety Officer:

The Child Safety Officer will:

- a) Provide authoritative advice:
 - I. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
 - II. Liaise with the School Leadership Team to maintain the visibility of child safety.
 - III. 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.

- b) Raise awareness:
 - I. Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
 - II. Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
 - III. Ensure the child safety policy is publicly available, 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.
 - IV. Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special education needs and young carers.
 - V. Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.

- c) Train:
 - I. 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.
 - II. Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
 - III. Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff.
 - IV. Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

C) Informing the School Community

- Child safety information will be embedded in regular school communications, including year level information nights, the newsletter and the school website.
- Key child safety personnel will be identified, including their roles and contact details.
- The school will update the school community in regards to the school's progress in implementing child safety strategies into practice, changing strategies or developing new strategies.
- The Wellbeing Team will champion child safety in our school; they will promote, monitor and report on the implementation of the school's child safety strategies.
- The Wellbeing Team will facilitate reports of progress to the School Council as appropriate.

D) Evaluation

- The Wellbeing Team will review our school's child safety-related policies and practices at least annually or following the identification of a potential risk, or a report that occurs within the school.
- As part of their review and evaluation, the Wellbeing Team will consult with staff and where appropriate the wider community to inform strategic directions and practices.
- Outcomes of the review will be reported to the Leadership Team, staff and the School Council.
- The Wellbeing Team will evaluate the training needs for staff and SC members, following their audit of the school's child safety-related policies and practices.

Links and Related Policies

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)

Related School Policies:

- Child Protection Reporting Policy
- Supervision and Duty of Care Policy

Evaluation

- This policy was last ratified by School Council – **May 2017**.

