**CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS (INCLUDING MANDATORY REPORTING) POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply to Kent Park Primary School. The specific procedures that are applicable at our school are contained at Appendix A.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council-run events, activities and services such as Outside School Hours Care.

**Policy**

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests.

Kent Park Primary School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

* Physical abuse
* Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation)
* Family violence
* Emotional abuse
* Neglect (including medical neglect)
* Grooming

The staff at Kent Park Primary School are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf).

At Kent Park Primary School, we also recognise the diversity of the children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

**Mandatory Reporting**

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic). [NOTE: as a result of changes to mandatory reporter groups, registered psychologists will be mandatory reporters from 1 March 2019, and then from 21 January 2020, school counsellors will also be mandatory reporters.]

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

* a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse, and
* the child’s parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Kent Park Primary School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually. We also require all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department’s *Policy and Advisory Library*: [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy).

### **Child in need of protection**

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS Child Protection, see the Department’s *Policy and Advisory Library*: [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy) and [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf)

At Kent Park Primary School, we also encourage all staff to make a referral to Child FIRST when they have significant concern for a child’s wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotectobligation.aspx).

### **Reportable Conduct**

Our school must notify the Department’s Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of ‘reportable conduct’.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

* a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
* behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child.
* significant neglect of a child; or
* misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our principal must notify the Department’s Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health staff and school council employees.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they should notify the Regional Director.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department’s *Policy and Advisory Library*: [Reportable Conduct](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/reportable-conduct-scheme/policy).

### **Failure to disclose offence**

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a ‘reasonable belief’ that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a ‘reasonable excuse’ or exemption from doing so.

“Reasonable belief” is not the same as having proof. A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed when:

* a child states that they have been sexually abused
* a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
* someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
* professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
* signs of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

“Reasonable excuse” is defined by law and includes:

* fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
* where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department’s *Policy and Advisory Library*: [Failure to disclose offence](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy).

### **Failure to protect offence**

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department’s *Policy and Advisory Library*: [Failure to protect offence](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy).

**Grooming**

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic). This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.

For more information about this offence and reporting obligationssee: [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy).

**RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safety Policy

**Review Cycle**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Policy Updated: | December 2020 |
| Cited By: | School Council – 9th December 2020 |
| Policy Review Date: | December 2023 |

**APPENDIX A**

**CHILD SAFETY Responding and REPORTING PROCEDURES AT kent park primary school**

**For students**

* All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
* If a student does not know who to approach at Kent Park Primary School, they should start with the school social worker.
* All Kent Park Primary School students can ask any staff member for permission at any time to speak to school social worker in a safe and friendly environment. Student are given the choice of speaking in the social workers office or outside. Students may bring a trusted peer or staff member to participate in or provide support for such students.

**Managing disclosures made by students**

*When managing a disclosure, you should:*

* listen to the student and allow them to speak
* stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child’s language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
* be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
* highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
* assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
* do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, “What happened next?” rather than “Why?”
* be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
* do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
* reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
* use verbal facilitators such as, “I see”, restate the child’s previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way (“what happened next?”)
* tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying “I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you”).

*When managing a disclosure, you should AVOID:*

* displaying expressions of panic or shock
* asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
* going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
* making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault
* making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

**General procedures**

Our school will follow the [*Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse*](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf) (Four Critical Actions) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

All staff at our school who believe that a child is in need of protection, even if it doesn’t meet the threshold required for mandatory reporting or the staff member is not a mandatory reporter, should in the first instance, speak to the school social worker or should make the required reports to DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police as necessary.

At our school the principal and the social worker will be responsible for monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a staff member or any other person from reporting to the relevant authorities if they form a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of abuse.

**Reporting suspicions, disclosures or incidents of child abuse**

*Responsibilities of all school staff*

If a school staff member reasonably suspects or witnesses an incident of child abuse or receives a disclosure of child abuse, they must:

* If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid and call 000.
* Speak to the Principal or social worker as soon as possible, who will follow the [Four Critical Actions](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf).
* Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in either the Principal or social worker’s office.
* If the staff member is a mandatory reporter and reasonably believes that a student has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse from which the child’s parents have not protected the child, they must ensure that a report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police has been made by the principal or school social worker. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the mandatory reporter must make the report.
* If the staff member has formed a ‘reasonable belief’ that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child, they must ensure that a report to Victoria Police has been made by the principal or school social worker. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the staff member must make the report.

In circumstances where a member of the leadership team disagrees that a report needs to be made, but the staff member has formed a ‘reasonable belief’ that the child is in need of protection and/or has been the victim of sexual abuse, the staff member must still contact DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police to make the report.

*Responsibilities of Principal and Social Worker:*

The principal or social worker is responsible for promptly managing the school’s response to an incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the incident, suspicion or disclosure is taken seriously. The social worker is also responsible for responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

If the principal or social worker receives a report from a school staff member or member of the school community of a suspicion, disclosure or incident of child abuse, they must:

* Follow the [Four Critical Actions](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf) as soon as possible, including:
	+ Responding to an emergency
	+ Reporting to authorities/referring to services
	+ Contacting parents/carers and
	+ Providing ongoing support.
* Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure, including actions taken and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in either the principal or social worker’s office in a locked filing cabinet. They are also responsible for ensuring that any staff member who reported the incident, disclosure or suspicion to them also makes and keeps notes of the incident.
* At Kent Park Primary School, the principal and social worker will be responsible for ensuring that there is a prompt response to the disclosure and that the child is appropriately supported.

If the principal/other nominated staff member responsible above is unavailable, the student’s classroom teacher or year level leader will take on the role and responsibilities described in this section.

**Duty of care and ongoing support for students**

Fulfilling the requirements in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of abuse.

All staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students. All staff must ensure that principal or social worker or other appropriate staff member is aware of any incidents, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible after they occur. This will allow appropriate supports to be put in place for the student affected.

**For school visitors, volunteers and school community members**

All community members aged 18 years or over should be aware of their legal obligations – see *Failure to disclose offence* above, in this Policy.

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details see the Four Critical Actions - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf>

There is no requirement for community members to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DHHS Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the school, and where disclosure of that concern will not compromise any potential police investigation, the community member should report this concern to the principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Policy Updated  | November 2020 |
| Policy Review Date | November 2023 |

# Minimum Standard: Child Safe

[Ministerial Order No. 870](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf) sets out the specific actions that registered schools need to take to meet the [child safe standards](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/standards.html). The Ministerial Order places accountability for managing the risk of child abuse with school governing authorities.

The child safe standards came into effect for all Victorian schools on 1 August 2016.

A new [minimum standard for school registration](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/schminsdards.aspx) requires schools to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order.

The Following Child Safe documents have been compiled using the following resources:

[Creating a Child Safe Organisation Guide](https://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjslfrD2cLQAhVGsJQKHfrIAGQQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ccyp.vic.gov.au%2Fdownloads%2Fcreating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHEtblzqzFE2jltW)

[An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards State of Victoria](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)

[Protect – Identifying All Forms of Child Abuse in Victorian Schools](https://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwj2rYHc2cLQAhVCkZQKHStLDU0QFggjMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.education.vic.gov.au%2FDocuments%2Fabout%2Fprograms%2Fhealth%2Fprotect%2FChildSafeStandard5_Schools)

[VRQA Child Safe Standards Toolkit](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/resources.html)

## Child Safe Standard 1

Strategies to Embed an Organisational Culture of Child Safety, Including Effective Leadership Arrangements at Carrington Primary School

**Background Information and Rationale**

* Victoria’s Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) outlines the basic human rights of all people. It was introduced in Victoria through the [*Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/54D73763EF9DCA36CA2571B6002428B0/%24FILE/06-043a.pdf).
* The Charter requires that governments, local councils and other public authorities not act inconsistently with the Charter and hence the introduction of the seven Child Safe Standards.
* [Ministerial Order (MO) 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf) which comes into effect 1 August 2016, 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

* 1. develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school
	2. allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies
	3. inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities
	4. put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices

and

* 1. periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.”
* [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf) identifies five elements of the Standard 1 requirement, including developing strategies, allocating roles and responsibilities, informing the school community, putting the strategies into practice, and periodic review. If a school is satisfied that its culture of child safety meets or exceeds the minimum standard in the Ministerial Order, the school needs to ensure that it can demonstrate the strength of its organisational culture to the VRQA.
* All staff and volunteers in organisations providing services to children need to recognise the importance and legislative implications, of keeping children safe. Under this Standard, organisations need to establish new ways or build on existing systems to embed or improve on a culture of child safety throughout all levels of their organisation.
* Preventing child abuse and responding to allegations is everyone’s business. The Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice. To engage this cultural change, schools need to:
	+ help leaders create an organisational culture that protects children from abuse
	+ ensure the school’s policies and practices reflect a commitment to child safety
	+ ensure leadership is aware of allegations and substantiated cases of abuse and responds in ways that protect children from abuse
	+ ensure staff and volunteers know and understand the organisation’s commitment to child safety
	+ commit to continuous improvement through regular reviews and updating policies and practices and being open to scrutiny.
* To comply with the Child Safe Standards, an organisation must include the following principles as part of each standard:
	+ promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
	+ promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ promoting the safety of children with a disability
* The school may already use good leadership strategies. Leaders can use this resource to help protect children from abuse by embedding child safety in the school’s everyday thinking and practice.
* Whilst working with children can be very rewarding, it also brings additional responsibilities.
* Schools must act to protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout the organisation so that child safety is part of everyone’s everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.
* A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. The school should foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults should know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

**Purpose**

* To ensure Kent Park Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf).
* To identify those aspects of school leadership that will help to embed an organisational culture of child safety.
* To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe environment.
* To raise awareness within the school community of the importance of child safety.
* To ensure the promotion of:
	+ the cultural safety of Aboriginal children if applicable
	+ the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ the safety of children with a disability

**Definitions**

At Kent Park Primary School, the Leadership Team comprises 4 members:

* Principal
* Social Worker
* SIT Leader
* PLC Leader

Social Worker - a point for contact for children who feel unsafe or who wish to disclose abuse.

The School Council is the governing body and is responsible for ratifying all policies developed by the school.

In all Standards, the term “child” applies to any person under the age of 18 years. (For a glossary of all terms, please refer to Appendix ‘[Child Safe Standard 1 Glossary of Terms’](#3fg1ce0)).

**Guidelines for Implementation**

* The safety and wellbeing of our school population is our highest priority and our first consideration.
* 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.
* To reinforce the message to be conveyed within the Standards, the school has consciously chosen to use the term ‘child’ or ‘children’ rather than ‘student/students’. The exception is where the term ‘student’ is integral to the name of a document.
* The Leadership Team at Kent Park Primary School will take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues.
* It is seen as vital that the Leadership Team has a clear understanding of how developed the school’s child safety approaches are.
* The school recognises that developing a child safe environment is an ongoing process and will not be achieved in the short term.
* Implementing the Child Safe Standards requires an ongoing commitment. It will not be achieved in one activity or exercise. However, this does not have to be a complex process and will involve:
	+ regular staff briefings and discussions
	+ taking every opportunity to provide information to the parent community e.g. through Newsletter articles, meetings with Parent Organisations as applicable
	+ regular updates to School Council (a regular agenda item)
* To begin the process of assessing how child safe the school is, the Leadership Team is systematically completing the Child Safety Review.
* Existing policies have been reviewed and updated to stress the importance the school places on child safety with sentences such as the first two dot points above. This includes the Child Safe Policy (November 2015) which has had additions and amendments as the school gained a better understanding of a child safe culture.
* The school’s Vision, Mission & Values Statement will include child safety as a key component.
* The Leadership Team has developed an interim response to the seven Child Safe Standards and collaboratively will review each Standard when more information comes to hand.
* When the next School Strategic Plan is developed, it is expected that school goals will relate to the development of a child safe culture.
* The components of the school’s child safe culture are:

Child Safety Review

Over a period of time, and with broad consultation, the school will complete the Child Safety Review as it will help the school to identify what is currently in place and what needs to be developed.

Children have a unique voice and are able to contribute to discussions about how they interact with the school. Through already established forums such as the Student Representative Council and in an age-appropriate manner involving class discussions and focus groups, children will be asked what makes them feel safe and unsafe. The school will provide opportunities for opinions to be provided confidentially. Children will be told about what the school is doing to help keep them safe, ensuring the experience is a positive one. We will consistently let children know that their views are valued and respected.

The school will set aside Staff Meeting time so that all staff, teaching and non-teaching, will be given an opportunity to participate in the review to help to identify areas of risk of harm or injury and encourage everyone involved in the school to take a proactive approach to reducing risk.

The already established Consultative Committee, Professional Learning Teams and staff as a whole will provide input. Other forums such as hosted meetings, newsletter articles, surveys and questionnaires will be provided so that School Council, parents and volunteers can provide input into the review.

The review will be completed systematically with an invitation to participate and a date always set for the next section to be addressed. In that way, there will always be a reassurance the work being undertaken is of paramount importance to the school over the long term.

When the school has completed the Child Safety Review, we will have identified the areas in which we need to improve. At this point, an Action Plan will be developed.

Leadership and Staff Responsibilities

The School’s Child Safe Officer is The Principal.

The Leadership Team is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety in the school.

The Leadership Team will take the lead in protecting children from abuse.

However, staff have the responsibility to make school leadership aware of child abuse allegations and risks so that appropriate action can be taken.

All allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by this school. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable.

If any staff member believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse, they must immediately call 000 and ask for police. In an emergency, this action is to occur without consultation.

(Failure to disclose the information to the police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.)

Identification and Analysis of Risk of Abuse

The school will adopt an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how your organisation identifies, assess, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks. Please refer to [Standard 6](#_2jh5peh).

Risk analysis always forms part of our preparation for school camps and some excursions. The analysis will now include possible potential for child abuse.

Development of a Child Safe Policy

The school has developed a child safe policy which outlines our commitment to promoting children’s wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. Please refer to the school’s policy documents and to [Child Safe Standard 2](#_2rrrqc1).

Development of a Code of Conduct

The school has developed a code of conduct for staff, teaching and non-teaching, which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. The [Kent Park Primary School Child Safe Code of Conduct and Agreement](#_vu832twpn0vo) references the Child Safe Policy and explicitly prohibits any staff member from communicating with children on social media. It also informs staff of the need for a current Working with Children Check which is recorded on CASES21.

The school’s [Student Engagement Policy](#_43ky6rz), the [Antibullying Policy](#_23ckvvd), the [eSmart Policy](#_lll6vk4xekd8) and the [Mobile Phone Policy](#_1664s55) also describe appropriate interaction between children. Please refer to [Standard 3](#_16x20ju).

Choosing Suitable Employees and Volunteers

The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant’s most recent line manager. The school’s [Excursions and Incursion Policy](#_w7zscn2oo5f0) and the [Working with Children Checks – Staff & Volunteers Policies](#_meukdy) have details of the steps the school will take to promote a child safe environment. Please refer to the [Standard 4](#_3qwpj7n).

Visitors to the School

The school has made clear decisions about what category of visitor is welcome in the school and the steps the school will take to ensure the safety of children. Please refer to the school’s [Visitors in School Policy](#_1baon6m) and the [Photographing & Filming Students Policy](#_25b2l0r). Please refer to the [Standard 4](#_3qwpj7n).

Support, Training, Supervision and Enhancement of Performance

The school will ensure 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, leadership need to understand their responsibilities.

New staff and trainee teachers if applicable, will be trained as part of the induction process.

The school has a School Social Worker. The SW already is a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse. The school would enhance the role to include Child Safe responsibilities including the promotion of child safety within the school and the community. Additional training in child safety issues will be provided. Duties will be listed in the job description. Please refer to [Standard 4](#_3qwpj7n).

Promoting Inclusion

The school values diversity and will be inclusive to all children and families. In particular, the school will establish a culture that supports:

* + cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations if applicable
	+ cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters
	+ the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring your organisation is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

The school understands that for Aboriginal people, culture is about family networks, Elders and ancestors. It is about relationships, languages, dance, ceremony and heritage. Culture is about spiritual connection to lands and waters. It is the way stories are passed on and knowledge given to babies and children. It is how people are greeted. It is looking for connection. It is about all the parts that bind us together.

The school recognises that creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture is an important first step. Symbols and images that surround a place send an important message about respect. By acknowledging the Country in which the school is located, we are demonstrating our willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures. As part of the policy review process, the school will consider whether or not ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ should form part of its ceremonies.

The school recognises that cultural safety is living in an environment that is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are what they need.

It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

The school recognises that promotion of cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds involves:

* + ensuring the school clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance of discrimination
	+ being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds
	+ recognising times of importance to different cultures
	+ ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of decoration and artwork
	+ employing staff that are representative of the local community
	+ actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved
	+ asking about the best way to provide information to children and families

The school recognises that promotion of the safety of children with a disability involves:

* + acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure risk assessment processes considers their needs
	+ ensuring the school clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes
	+ all children
	+ making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties
	+ being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability
	+ supporting staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability
	+ thinking about how the school can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families

The school’s definition of ‘disability’ extends to children with a medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy, anaphylaxis or blood-borne viruses and has developed policies to support these children.

The school recognises that respecting diversity means:

* + valuing and respecting people’s beliefs
	+ building responsive relationships
	+ communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs
	+ examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs and
	+ respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another
	+ acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance

The school’s [Anti-Discrimination Policy](#_idkaivn5nehm) describes the school’s commitment to providing teaching and learning environments that are free from discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion. Anti-discrimination extends to the school’s dress code so that children are treated equally with the rights of individual children balanced against the best interests of the school community as a whole when developing and implementing their dress codes.

Empowering and Promoting the Participation of Children in Decision-Making

The school promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining a child safe environment.

Ideas from children are sought formally by completion of the annual Student Attitude to School Survey which specifically addresses feelings of safety, through the Junior School Council (JSC) which comprises children from each class in Years Prep - 6 and through focus groups and other formal and informal forums for children.

Professional Learning

The school has a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning for all staff.

There is an annual briefing for mandatory reporting protocols which is a component of induction for new staff.

This will be extended to include volunteers and external providers.

Staff are given information about a number of school policies with an emphasis now placed on the child safe related policies.

* The school will know it has successfully implemented Standard 1 when:
	+ there are clear and transparent arrangements for leadership to be made aware of child safety issues
	+ policies and practices prioritise child safety and promote shared responsibility – not just at a leadership level – by outlining all staff and volunteer responsibilities
	+ policies and procedures include the steps staff, volunteers, children or their families should take if they have concerns about the organisation’s leadership in regard to child safety
	+ child safety is a core part of public and internal messaging
	+ a culture exists where staff, volunteers, children and families feel comfortable and supported when talking about any child safety concerns.
	+ a culture exists of supporting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, and the organisations working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to improve safety for Aboriginal children
	+ a culture exists of supporting cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ a culture exists of supporting safety for children with a disability

**EVALUATION:**

Major evaluation of this document will be carried out by the Policy and Procedures Committee as part of the cyclic review process, in four years’ time or before, if the committee deems it necessary.

Approved Date: \_\_/12/2020 Review Date: 01/12/2024

**Child Safe Standard 2**

**Rationale**

* The child safe standards require organisations including schools that provide services for children to have a child safe policy or a statement of commitment to child safety.
* A child safe policy is an overarching document that provides an overview of the key elements of an organisation’s approach to child safety. It should:
	+ clearly state the organisation’s zero tolerance of child abuse
	+ detail the organisation's child safe processes and procedures, or link to existing documents that include child safety considerations - for example, its reporting procedures (including leadership responsibilities), how to respond to an allegation of child abuse, human resources and recruitment practices, and risk management strategy and procedures
	+ clearly state the organisation’s commitment to cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability
	+ detail expectations and requirements of staff and volunteers to ensure the protection of children, and the training and support staff receive
	+ include contact details for people to access information in relation to child safety, such as the Child Safety Officer. A Child Safety Officer or Student Welfare Officer is a person in the organisation 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 child abuse. The organisation may consider including child safety officer/champion duties in the person’s job description
	+ include how and when the policy and other child safety tools are reviewed to help the organisation improve.
* The school recognises that this policy is one of seven standards relating to the school’s child safe culture.
* The school further recognises that a child safe culture will not develop in the short term.

**Purpose**

* To ensure Kent Park Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf).
* To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
* To clearly demonstrate our commitment to creating and maintaining a safe environment.
* To outline the measures we have implemented as well as our mission and objectives in regards to child safety.
* To raise awareness within the school community of the importance of child safety.
* To empower children who are key stakeholders within our organisation.
* To ensure the school develops and publishes a child safe policy that is compliant with the Child Safe Standard 2.
* To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, we will define child abuse as any act committed against a child involving:

* + a sexual offence
	+ befriending or forming an emotional connection with the child with the intent of lowering inhibitions to perform abuse (grooming)
	+ physical violence
	+ serious emotional or psychological harm
	+ serious neglect of a child
	+ family violence

**Implementation**

* At Kent Park Primary School, we value:
	+ **Respect** – having regard for self, others and property and recognising and accepting the differences in ability, race, religion and beliefs of others
	+ **Tolerance** - willingness to accept feelings, habits, or beliefs that are different from your own and to be resilient
	+ **Kindness** – is showing others they are valuable by how you treat them
	+ **Honesty** - when we all speak the truth and act truthfully
	+ **Responsibility** – when we are all accountable for our actions and words, contributing positively to the school community
	+ **Empathy** – when we have the ability to sense other people’s emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling
* Kent Park Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment (both physical and online) for all the children in its care, including children with a disability, aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and diverse backgrounds if applicable.
* To ensure children have every opportunity to grow into happy, respectful citizens we have a zero tolerance of any form of child abuse. This zero-tolerance approach includes extensive safeguards and protections to ensure our school is free from the conditions under which child abuse could occur.
* This policy, in conjunction with other relevant policies outlines our mission and objectives in regard to child safety and the measures we will include to ensure that all students are in a safe environment.
* The safety and wellbeing of children at this school is our highest priority.
* The school is committed to acting in children’s best interests.
* We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, volunteers and the parent community.
* We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children if applicable, to the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
* 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.
* We have legal and moral obligations to report all allegations of child abuse. All our staff are trained in departmental child protection (mandatory reporting) requirements and this works in conjunction with our child safe policy.
* We have an obligation to contact authorities when we are worried about a child’s safety, which we follow rigorously.
* Any staff member who believes that a child is at immediate risk of abuse must phone 000.
* 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. Ongoing training will be provided to all staff to explain how to identify and eliminate these risks.
* Our recruiting practices include explicit references to our child safe policy and practices and provides essential information for all staff. This will include new staff being provided with copies of relevant policies and information being provided in all induction processes.
* We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
* The school’s Child Safe Policy will be publicly available to help raise awareness about the importance of child safety in our organisation and demonstrate our commitment to protecting children from abuse.
* It will be published on the school’s website and provided to new families on enrolment.
* New staff will be provided with a copy and briefed on the school’s attitude to child safety as part of the induction process.
* We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute to the development and review of this policy. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.
* The overall responsibility of implementation of the child safe policy rests with the Principal. Additional roles and responsibilities are outlined in the relevant related policies listed in the risk management section of this policy.
* The adherence to our child safe policy will be monitored by the Principal and Leadership Team and discussed as a standing item in Leadership and School Council meetings.
* The school will support children who disclose child abuse and ensure the immediate safety of these children.
* The school will ensure that procedures for raising and managing complaints and consequences for breaching of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, are known and understood by everyone. For specific procedures, please refer to the school’s Complaints, Parents Policy.

[Child Safe Code of Conduct](#_vu832twpn0vo)

Acceptable Behaviour

All staff, volunteers and School Council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children. They must:

* + adhere to Kent Park Primary School’s Child Safe Policy and uphold the school’s statement of commitment to child safety at all times
	+ take all reasonable steps to protect children (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders, children with a disability and children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) from abuse.
	+ any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns need to be reported to the school’s Principal. In the event that the principal is unavailable all child safety concerns must be reported to the child safety officer immediately
	+ maintain objectivity in their relationship with all children
	+ act with professional integrity
	+ treat everyone in the school community with respect
	+ listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly allegations of a serious nature
	+ promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ promote the safety of children with a disability
	+ promote the safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
	+ ensure as far as practicable that adults are not alone with children
	+ Report any concerns about staff/volunteer conduct to the Principal immediately
	+ understand and comply with our Child Protection ([Mandatory Reporting](#_1rvwp1q)) Policy.

Unacceptable Behaviour

All staff and volunteers must not:

* + ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
	+ exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (e.g. inappropriate sitting on laps)
	+ put children at risk of abuse (e.g. by locking doors)
	+ initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves such as toileting or changing clothes
	+ use inappropriate language in the presence of children
	+ express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
	+ discriminate against any child, because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
	+ have any online contact with a child (including social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family, unless necessary e.g. providing families with e.newsletters or assisting students with their school work
	+ photograph or video a child without consent
	+ work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

Any unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with seriously and legal authorities will be notified if necessary.

For full details, please refer to Child Safe [Standard 3](#_16x20ju).

Our Children

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

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

* + promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (if applicable)
	+ 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 all aspects of school life

All children have the right to:

* + feel and be safe in a supportive environment
	+ be treated fairly with respect, kindness and courtesy
	+ be able to learn without disruption
	+ be valued for their individuality, including race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual

For full details, please refer to Child Safe [Standard 3](#_16x20ju).

Our Staff and Volunteers

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

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by the school’s Child Safe Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

The signature of the staff members, volunteers and families attesting to having read, understood and agreeing to abide by would formalise the Code of Conduct and raise its profile within the school and the community.

All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Training and Supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in the 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, to 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 inducted into the school and supervised regularly to ensure they understand our philosophy 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. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through the Principal or directly to the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

The school takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

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.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

Whilst the safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern, we also are 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 families (as appropriate) on progress and any actions we take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they are 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. The school can detail how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

The school takes its 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 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.

All teachers are **mandatory reporters** and must comply with their responsibilities.

Non-teaching staff have an obligation to report if they form a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of harm.

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 our school on social media).

Risk analysis always forms part of our preparation for school camps and some excursions. The analysis will now include possible potential for child abuse. The school’s Incursions (Safety of Children Working with External Providers) Policy already has strategies to minimise the risk of abuse.

Kent Park Primary School considers any breach of this or other relevant policies a child safety risk and will respond to it accordingly. Staff have a responsibility to report any suspected breaches to the Principal or delegate immediately.

To identify, assess, manage and minimise child safety risks, Kent Park Primary School has a number of risk management strategies in place. These include:

* + Processes for
		1. establishing the context (internal and external factors, objectives, appetite for risk),
		2. identifying the risk,
		3. analysing and evaluating the risk and
		4. risk treatment (treat, share, retain, avoid)
	+ Maintaining a Risk Register detailing all risk to school visions, objectives and goals as well as risks to governance and any other business activities.
	+ Over a period of time, the Leadership Team will work collaboratively with staff, children, School Council and the community to:
		1. formally identify the potential risks within the school’s physical environment e.g. doors that lock, volunteers working unsupervised with children, volunteers working in the school grounds during recess periods, other visitors to the school, school boundaries, school camps or excursions
		2. consider the risks to children due age-related vulnerability, children who have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse, Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and children with a disability
		3. identify the risk associated with children working online including cyber bullying, online grooming, trolling, disclosure of personal details
		4. consider the opportunities for accidental or accidental harm e.g. poor physical environment leading to injury, poor supervision, high-risk activity, pushing, shoving, jostling, slapping, pinching etc.
		5. reflect on opportunities for psychological abuse – bullying, ignoring or isolating, lack of respect, social vilification or discrimination
		6. document the risks
		7. identify the level of risk i.e. low, medium or high
		8. consider the consequences of the risk e.g. moderate, severe
		9. develop strategies to minimise the risk e.g. require WWC Checks and/or criminal record checks for all volunteers, increase levels of supervision, change the environment, make it harder for abuse to occur
		10. review the risk management strategy annually or if an incident occurs
		11. set a time frame for completing the risk analysis and incorporating the learnings
		12. identify a person to lead the ongoing monitoring and review
* The school will know it has successfully implemented Standard 2 when:
	+ the school has a child safe policy approved by the School Council
	+ the school has made public their commitment to child safety
	+ all School Council members, staff and volunteers are aware of the school’s commitment to child safety and their duty of care requirements
	+ all staff and volunteers can easily access and understand the school’s commitment to child safety
	+ the school’s commitment to child safety includes a commitment to the safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.
* Please refer also to the school’s existing policies all of which are designed to create a safe environment for children.

**Evaluation**

Major evaluation of this document will be carried out by the Policy and Procedures Committee as part of the cyclic review process, in four years’ time or before, if the committee deems it necessary.

Approved Date: 07/12/2020 Review Date: 01/12/2024

**Child Safe Standard 3**

Child Safe Code of Conduct for Kent Park Primary School.

**Rationale**

* One of the most effective child safe strategies to help protect children from harm is a Code of Conduct.
* A Child Safe Code of Conduct establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
* It lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable relationships.
* If people behave in ways that are unacceptable the Code of Conduct enables the organisation to take action.
* Without a Code of Conduct, it can be very difficult to raise behavioural issues with staff and volunteers.
* If unacceptable behaviour continues, this can seriously compromise the safety of the environment,
* Swift and appropriate action must be taken when the Code is breached, otherwise people will continue to feel compromised or unsafe.

Rules about adult–child and child–child relationships

**Purpose**

* To ensure Kent Park Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf).
* To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
* To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
* To provide guidance to staff and volunteers on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.
* To ensure the school develops and publishes a code of conduct that is compliant with the Child Safe Standard 3.
* To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards students.

**Implementation**

* The safety and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for Kent Park Primary School.
* The school will know it has successfully implemented Standard 3 when:
	+ appropriate behaviour with children is clearly defined, accessible and understood by staff, volunteers, families and children
	+ steps staff should take if they identify child safety risks are clearly outlined
	+ staff, volunteers, families and children understand culturally safe behaviour and relationships with Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ staff, volunteers, families and children understand safe behaviour and relationships with children with a disability
	+ children and families from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds can access and understand the Code of Conduct
	+ efforts have been made to make the code of conduct accessible to children with a disability

Child Safe Code of Conduct

1. This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.
2. It is binding all staff members, volunteers and external providers working with children on-site or off-site.
3. Staff, volunteers and external providers are expected to signify that they have read and understood this Code of Conduct by completing the [attached statement](#_vu832twpn0vo) which will be recorded and filed appropriately.
4. All Kent Park Primary School staff, volunteers and external providers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by:
	* adhering to the [Child Safe Policy](#_lapljzcjpcia) and other related policies
	* taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
	* treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
	* welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive
	* respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way
	* modelling appropriate adult behaviour
	* listening to children and responding to them appropriately
	* reporting and acting on any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns
	* complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children
	* working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
	* respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know
5. Kent Park Primary School staff, volunteers and external providers must NOT:
	* seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
	* ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
	* use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
	* engage in rough physical games
	* discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
	* initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, putting on clothes
	* develop ‘special’ relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention

Internet Use

* + exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children
	+ have unauthorised contact with children online or by phone
	+ contact any child at this school by any form of social media
	+ download inappropriate material
1. Staff, volunteers and external providers should avoid unnecessary physical contact with children.
2. The school has identified that the following are not beyond bounds for physical contact:
	* escorting a young, uncertain, primary aged (particularly), by holding the hand
	* rendering first aid
	* comforting a distressed child by holding the shoulders briefly
	* assisting children with disabilities to complete physical tasks e.g. dressing after a swimming class
	* demonstrating/reinforcing a skill in sports coaching by e.g. showing a student how to hold a bat
	* a congratulatory pat on the shoulders
	* shaking hands
3. Induction procedures or manuals for new staff, volunteers and external providers will include information about the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
4. The school will conduct workshops and training sessions for staff to ensure that everyone involved with the school understands the requirements of the Code of Conduct and are clear what to do when someone breaches it.
5. Other adults will be advised that if they become aware of any risk’s adults may pose to children, or that children may pose to each other, in both physical and online environments, they should inform a member of the Leadership Team as soon as practicable.
6. So that all members of the school community, including parents and children, are aware of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, it will be displayed prominently in various locations throughout the school and posted on the website.
7. All staff should be aware that unsatisfactory performance procedures in relation to the Child Safe Code of Conduct may be applied as per the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2013, Schedule 5.
8. If a volunteer or external provider does not comply with the expected standard of behaviour, the Principal will discuss their behaviour with them. Noncompliance can lead to disciplinary action being taken, which may result in the person being asked to leave the organisation.
9. The school will ensure that procedures for raising and managing complaints and consequences for breaching of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, are known and understood by everyone. For specific procedures, please refer to the school’s [Raising Complaints & Concerns, Parents Policy](#_d7xe1lh1s0u).
10. For particularly high-risk activities, such as overnight camps, the school will determine whether or not a specific Code of Conduct is required. This could outline additional topics such as sleeping arrangements, personal care, leaving the site, no drugs or alcohol on site, staff-to-child ratio requirements, etc.

**Evaluation**

Major evaluation of this document will be carried out by the Policy and Procedures Committee as part of the cyclic review process, in four years’ time or before, if the committee deems it necessary.

Approved Date: 07/12/2020 Review Date: 01/12/2024

**Child Safe Standard 4**

Screening, Supervision & Training for New & Existing Personnel at Kent Park Primary School.

**Rationale**

* Carefully developed policies and procedures not only help to identify the most suitable persons to work with children in the school, they can also deter unsuitable persons from applying or being appointed, either in a paid or voluntary capacity.
* Selecting suitable and appropriate people to work with children is vital. Everyone benefits when the best people, who also share the school’s values about keeping children safe from harm, are chosen. If good care is taken during the recruitment phase, it is more likely that people who are unsuitable to work with children will be screened out. Good recruitment practices help to reduce the opportunities for harm to occur by deterring the ‘wrong’ people from applying.
* The school needs to be clear about the role and responsibilities of each position, particularly when they involve working closely with children.
* A job description or duty statement should include a clear outline of the role and also state the expectation that staff must provide a child safe environment. It should clearly spell out:
	+ the organisational context
	+ duties and tasks of the role
	+ qualifications, experience and attributes a person must have
	+ the level of responsibility and supervision associated with the positions about
* A well-developed job description is more likely to attract suitably qualified staff and volunteers. When roles and responsibilities are unclear, unsuitable people are more likely to apply because the organisation may not look as professional and capable of identifying unsuitable applicants.

**Purpose**

* To ensure Kent Park Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf).
* To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
* To raise awareness of the importance of child safety with staff.
* To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
* To ensure the school selects the best and most suitable staff for any position teaching or non-teaching.
* To ensure the school develops procedures and practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel and are compliant with the Child Safe Standard 4.
* To ensure the promotion of:
	+ the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
	+ the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ the safety of children with a disability

**Implementation**

* The school will ensure that newly recruited and existing staff and volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of the relevant policies and procedures and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.

 Recruitment - Screening

* The school will develop clear duty statements and job descriptions and ensure that appropriately qualified staff conduct interviews.
* Job advertisements will clearly state that the school is committed to child safety. This should be included in all advertisements, duty statements and other documents.
* Job advertisements will contain statements such as:
	+ We are committed to excellence and to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.
	+ All applicants must have full registration from the Victorian Institute of Teaching and be four year trained.
	+ Applicants must provide the names of three referees who can comment on previous experience in relation to the selection criteria.
	+ A valid Working with Children Check and a criminal record check is mandatory.
	+ We are a child safe and equal employment opportunity employer.
	+ Applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and from people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are encouraged.
* Referee checks will be carried out.
* The school will ensure decision-making is rigorous, defensible and transparent.
* The school is aware of the requirements of privacy legislation and laws relating to unlawful discrimination.
* Applicants will be told what will happen to any information they provide and who will have access to the information.
* Selection processes will be fair and just; however, the safety and wellbeing of children will be the primary consideration.
* During the interview process, applicants will be informed that a Working with Children Check and a criminal record check will be undertaken.
* For further information on avoiding charges of discrimination on the basis of a criminal record, the school will refer to The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s publication “[On the Record: Guidelines for the Prevention of Discrimination in Employment on the Basis of Criminal Record](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/human_rights/criminalrecord/on_the_record/download/otr_guidelines.pdf)”.
* Notwithstanding any of the above, the school will adhere to the recruitment requirements as described in DET’s Recruitment Guide, July 18 2016.

Post-Employment Supervision and Ongoing Training

* The school has in place a rigorous professional learning program for all staff.
* New staff are provided with information about matters such as the philosophy, vision, mission and values of the school, curriculum, students with medical conditions, school polices, OH&S and routine matters e.g. yard duty requirements.
* Graduate teachers are provided with additional induction opportunities generally over several school terms, including strategies to enhance teaching and learning.
* Mentoring, coaching and in-house training strategies are used for all staff.
* All staff must have a Professional Learning Plan based on the school’s Professional Learning Plan which is linked to the School Strategic Plan.
* Leadership development opportunities are a key component of the school’s professional learning program for senior staff.
* There is a significant budget allocation made for professional learning.
* The school is developing a formal induction program for volunteers, external providers (and contractors) to ensure they have appropriate information about the child safe culture of the school.
* The school regularly will provide information, training and education for School Council, staff and volunteers about child safety on a need’s basis, including:
	+ what child abuse is
	+ how to identify and reduce child abuse risks
	+ understanding and appreciating Aboriginal culture and other cultures and languages they may engage with in their role
	+ the importance of ensuring culturally safe environments for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and how to promote this
	+ the importance of ensuring safe environments for children with a disability, and how to promote this
	+ what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children, such as inappropriate sexualised play, bullying and fighting
	+ what is inappropriate behaviour between children and adults, with reference to the code of conduct.
* The school will support staff to build resilience and cope with child abuse incidences
* As part of the process, the school will monitor the currency of all Working with Children Checks and advise staff, volunteers and external providers two months before the expiration date.
* The school will know it has successfully implemented Standard 4 when:
	+ interviews, police record checks (including identity checks), reference checks and Working with Children Checks (where necessary) are undertaken for staff and volunteers
	+ recruitment processes select appropriate staff and volunteers, and discourage inappropriate staff entering the organisation
	+ relevant staff and volunteers are trained in child safety, and understand and practice appropriate behaviour

**Evaluation**

Major evaluation of this document will be carried out by the Policy and Procedures Committee as part of the cyclic review process, in four years’ time or before, if the committee deems it necessary.

Approved Date: 07/12/2020 Review Date: 01/12/2024

**Child Safe Standard 5**

Processes for Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse at Kent Park Primary School.

These processes apply to allegations of disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors or other persons connected to the school environment.

**Rationale**

* The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
* Whilst reporting can be difficult to do, people are much more likely to report concerns if there is a clear and effective reporting process to follow. The safety of the child and the risk of harm must always be the primary consideration, with due regard for confidentiality and fairness to the person against whom the allegation has been made.
* Organisations have a responsibility to encourage staff, volunteers and children to speak up when they are uncomfortable or concerned. When there is a well-publicised reporting process that staff and volunteers are trained to use, it is more likely that people will raise relevant and important issues about child safety. This process will also encourage people to give helpful and important information that reduces the risk of all forms of harm to children, staff and volunteers.
* Concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children can range from an uncomfortable feeling through to a direct observation or a disclosure by a child.
* Examples of child safety concerns include:
	+ concerns about a physical environment that may pose a risk to children (this includes health and hygiene issues)
	+ inappropriate or special relationships developing between staff or volunteers and children
	+ inadequate staff–child supervision ratios
	+ breaches of the Code of Conduct, particularly if they are persistent
	+ feelings of discomfort about interactions between a staff member or volunteer and a child
	+ suspicions or beliefs that children are at risk of harm
	+ observations of concerning changes in behaviour
	+ children’s disclosures of abuse or harm, which must be reported to Child Protection or the police
* This Standard provides 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 within the school environment.

Legal Responsibilities

Every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether within the school environment 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 years 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).

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.

**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.

**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 years 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.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of abuse.

Further information about failure to protect can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website.](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-06/Failure-to-protect-offence-fact-sheet.docx)

**Purpose**

* To ensure Kent Park Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf).
* To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe environment.
* To raise awareness of the importance of child safety with staff and the community.
* To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
* To ensure the school develops procedures and practices that reduce the risk of child abuse and are compliant with the Child Safe Standard 5.
* To ensure the promotion of:
	+ the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
	+ the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ the safety of children with a disability and
	+ vulnerable children

**Definitions**

‘The school environment’ is defined as anywhere within the school grounds, classrooms, computer and/or science laboratories, storerooms, offices.

It extends to off-site locations such as venues for school camps, sporting venues, excursions.

Physical Violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Possible physical indicators:

* + unexplained bruises
	+ burns and/or fractured bones
	+ multiple injuries
	+ bald patches indicating hair has been pulled out

Possible behavioural indicators:

* + showing wariness or distrust of adults
	+ wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
	+ fear of specific people
	+ unexplained absences
	+ academic problems

Sexual Offences

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.

Possible physical indicators:

* + presence of sexually transmitted diseases
	+ pregnancy
	+ vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

Possible behavioural indicators:

* + displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child’s age
	+ difficulty sleeping
	+ being withdrawn
	+ complaining of headaches or stomach pains
	+ fear of specific people
	+ showing wariness or distrust of adults
	+ displaying aggressive behaviour

Serious Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed, or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:

* + delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development
	+ physical signs of self-harming

Possible behavioural indicators:

* + exhibiting low self-esteem
	+ exhibiting high anxiety
	+ displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour
	+ being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful
	+ self-harming

Serious Neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child’s health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:

* + frequent hunger
	+ malnutrition
	+ poor hygiene
	+ inappropriate clothing

Possible behavioural indicators:

* + stealing/asking for food
	+ staying at school outside of school hours
	+ aggressive behaviour
	+ misusing alcohol or drugs
	+ academic issues

Family Violence

Family violence is abuse towards a family member that may include physical violence or threats of violence, verbal abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, sexual or social abuse.

Possible physical indicators:

* + speech disorders
	+ delays in physical development
	+ failure to thrive
	+ bruises, cuts, welts on any part of the body
	+ internal injuries

Possible behavioural indicators:

* + violent and or aggressive play or behaviour
	+ depression or anxiety
	+ nervous, withdrawn
	+ difficulties in adjusting to change
	+ ‘acting out’ such as cruelty to animals
	+ overly compliant, shy, passive withdrawn
	+ risk taking behaviour
	+ taking on care-taker roles prematurely

Racial, Cultural, Religious Abuse

This is conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

**Guidelines for Implementation**

* The promotion of a child safe culture is this school’s highest priority.
* The school has zero tolerance of child abuse.
* Kent Park Primary School has appointed the school’s Principal and Social Worker as the Child Safe Officers.
* Physical or sexual abuse of a child is a crime and must be reported to the police.
* The school will ensure all staff, volunteers and external providers are aware that failure to disclose and failure to protect are now criminal offences under Victorian law.
* While the standards apply specifically to child abuse, the school will look to promote children’s health and wellbeing in a broader sense.
* If staff or any other adult has significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child they are encouraged to report their concerns to [DHHS Child Protection](https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection) or [Child FIRST](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-first-and-family-services).
* Alternatively, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hours 7 days, toll free).
* The school will take a four-step approach to incidents of child abuse:
	+ respond to the emergency
	+ report the abuse to authorities
	+ contact parents/carers
	+ provide on-going support to those involved – children, staff and families
* For full information and a descriptive poster, the school will contact [www.education.vic.gov/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov/protect)
* The school will ensure children know who to talk to if they are worried or are feeling unsafe and ensure that they are comfortable to do so.
* Children, parents, staff and volunteers will be encouraged and supported in their efforts to protect themselves and others.
* The school will proactively engage with children in an age-appropriate manner about abuse.
* The school will utilise a range of strategies to respond to allegations of child abuse depending on who has who disclosed as follows:

If a Child Discloses an Incident of Abuse

The person to whom the allegation of child abuse has been disclosed will:

* + Try to separate the child 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 what they are saying is taken very seriously, it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
	+ Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in the school or the police.
	+ 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.
	+ Not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.

If you think the child is able to do so, provide her/him with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.

As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child’s words and report the disclosure to the Principal/Assistant Principal, Social Worker, police or DHHS Child Protection.

Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately and that the record is stored securely.

Note 1: If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000 and ask for police.

Note 2: If the discussion has not been with the Principal, she/he must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

If a Parent/Carer Alleges Their Child has been Abused Within the School Environment or Raises a Concern

The person to whom the allegation of child abuse has been disclosed will:

* + Explain that the school 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 notes will be taken during the discussion to capture all details.
	+ Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the Principal/Assistant Principal, the police or [DHHS Child Protection](https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/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.

Note: if the discussion has not been with the Principal, she/he must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

The school is aware that 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. The 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, the school will ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to review policies and procedures and/or to provide professional learning for staff.

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 (DHHS) 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)>.

Specific Strategies for Responding to an Incident of Child Abuse

The school will:

* + Ensure children are safe, and that procedures for responding to alleged abuse are fair and focus on child safety, for example by suspending the alleged perpetrator or providing them with alternate duties pending investigation.
	+ Provide support and comfort to a child reporting abuse or safety concerns, and never blame or interrogate a child.
	+ Contact parents/carers.
	+ Be culturally aware if the incident involves an Aboriginal child, a child from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background or a child with a disability as described above.
	+ Provide ongoing support or make referrals for support to alleged victims, their families and affected staff, such as helping them understand their rights and the process that will be followed in responding to allegations, and assistance in accessing counselling or other support as required.
	+ Provide support and/or counselling for the staff member or adult who makes the report.
	+ Undertake timely reviews of the school’s child safe policies and procedures to be followed if child abuse occurs.
	+ Review organisational responses following an incident to help drive continuous improvement.

Professional Learning

The school’s Mandatory Reporting Policy requires that an annual professional learning session will be held on protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (mandatory reporting protocol).

New staff are briefed about their mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of the induction procedure.

In addition to this and as soon as practicable, the school will arrange professional learning for all staff including topics such as:

* + The school’s zero tolerance policy
	+ Understanding the implications of Standard 5
	+ The Child Safe Code of Conduct
	+ Responding to child abuse allegations
	+ Understanding cultural sensitivities

Volunteers and external providers will be briefed prior to commencing work within the school.

Successful Implementation of Standard 5

The school will know this standard has been successfully implemented when:

* + all legal requirements for reporting suspected child abuse are complied with
	+ staff and volunteers are aware of actions they should take in the event of an incident or allegation, including the type of contact that should be reported, who is responsible for reporting and to whom the report should be made
	+ allegations of abuse and safety concerns are appropriately recorded and stored securely to protect privacy
	+ disciplinary processes, that are clearly defined and understood by all staff and volunteers, are adhered to when necessary
	+ adequate and suitable steps are taken to ensure children are safe if an allegation of child abuse is reported, for example by suspending a worker or providing them with alternative duties while an investigation is undertaken
	+ children reporting an allegation of abuse or safety concerns are provided with support and comfort
	+ culturally safe practices are applied if an Aboriginal child is involved in an allegation of abuse
	+ if an allegation of abuse involves a child from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, the required steps are taken to ensure the child and the child's family are supported to understand the situation, including the use of an interpreter if required
	+ where an allegation of abuse involves a child with a disability, steps are taken to ensure the child and their family understand the situation and are supported

**Evaluation**

Major evaluation of this document will be carried out by the Policy and Procedures Committee as part of the cyclic review process, in four years’ time or before, if the committee deems it necessary.

Approved Date: 07/12/20120 Review Date: 01/12/2024

**Child Safe Standard 6**

Strategies to Identify and Reduce or Remove Risks of Child Abuse at Kent Park Primary School

**Rationale**

* All organisations have a duty of care to protect the children they are involved with.
* Creating a child safe organisation begins with a clear, evidence-informed understanding of the potential risks to children in the setting.
* Taking a preventative approach means identifying the potential risks in the school environment. These range from the impact of the physical environment and how it affects the continual supervision of staff and children to staff recruitment practices.
* Despite the implementation of best-practice approaches, risks always exist for children who access child-centred organisations.
* School staff, students and parents are in the best position to know the vulnerabilities and risks within the school and its activities and how to plan to prevent them.
* By adopting a risk management approach, the school is acting in a preventative manner and can reduce the likelihood of risks becoming realised.
* Risk management maximises the school’s ability to deliver on school objectives, to promote sound decision making and works to safeguard children, student and employee wellbeing.
* The risk management process will involve:
	+ establishing the context (internal and external factors, objectives, appetite for risk)
	+ identify the risk,
	+ analysing and evaluating the risk
	+ risk treatment (treat, share, retain, avoid)

**Purpose**

* To ensure Kent Park Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf).
* To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe environment.
* To describe the minimum requirements for child safe risk management in the school.
* To ensure the school develops strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks that are compliant with the Child Safe Standard 6.
* To ensure the promotion of:
	+ the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
	+ the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ the safety of vulnerable children
	+ the safety of children with a disability
* To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

**Definition**

‘The school environment’ is defined as anywhere within the school grounds, classrooms, computer laboratories, specialist areas, storerooms, offices.

It extends to off-site locations such as venues for school camps, sporting venues, excursions.

**Implementation**

* The safety and wellbeing of all children is the school’s highest priority.
* The school has zero tolerance of child abuse.
* At Kent Park Primary School, management of risk is everyone’s responsibility.
* To reduce the likelihood of harm, the school will think about and define the risks. (What could go wrong within the school environment as a whole or for any specific activity?)
* Children will be involved in this process, as they may have a very different idea about what makes them feel unsafe. This will be done formally through the Student Attitude to School Survey, the Junior School Council and through consultation formally and informally through class discussions and one-on-one meetings e.g. with the Child Safe Officer.
* If applicable, Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, vulnerable children and children with a disability will be strongly encouraged to provide input
* Over a period of time, the Leadership Team will work collaboratively with staff, children, School Council and the community to:
	+ formally identify the potential risks within the school’s physical environment e.g. doors that lock, volunteers working unsupervised with children, volunteers working in the school grounds during recess periods, other visitors to the school, school boundaries, school camps or excursions
	+ consider the risks to children due age-related vulnerability, children who have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse, Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, vulnerable children and children with a disability
	+ identify the risk associated with children working online including cyber bullying, online grooming, trolling, disclosure of personal details
	+ consider the opportunities for accidental harm e.g. poor physical environment leading to injury, poor supervision, high-risk activity, pushing, shoving, jostling, slapping, pinching etc.
	+ reflect on opportunities for psychological abuse – bullying, ignoring or isolating, lack of respect, social vilification or discrimination
	+ document the risks
	+ identify the level of risk i.e. low, medium or high
	+ consider the consequences of the risk e.g. moderate, severe
	+ develop strategies to minimise the risk e.g. require WWC Checks and/or criminal record checks for all volunteers, increase levels of supervision, change the environment, make it harder for abuse to occur
	+ review the risk management strategy annually or if an incident occurs
	+ set a time frame for completing the risk analysis and incorporating the learnings
	+ identify a person to lead the ongoing monitoring and review

The school will know that Standard 6 has been successfully implemented when:

* + situational risks are considered and understood by all personnel
	+ steps are put in place to reduce risks where possible
	+ risk management approaches are regularly reflected on and improved
	+ specific risks to Aboriginal children, to children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability are identified, assessed and mitigated
* Please refer also to the school’s [Camping Policy](#_3fwokq0), [Excursions and Incursions Policy](#_w7zscn2oo5f0), [Working With Children Check (Volunteers)](#_1ljsd9k), [and Visitors to the School Policy](#_1baon6m), [Risk Assessment Matrix](#_p1c12h24z18r).

**Evaluation**

Major evaluation of this document will be carried out by the Policy and Procedures Committee as part of the cyclic review process, in four years’ time or before, if the committee deems it necessary.

Approved Date: 07/12/20 Review Date: 01/12/2024

**Child Safe Standard 7**

Strategies to Promote the Participation and Empowerment of Children at Kent Park Primary School

**Rationale**

* It must be acknowledged that a significant power imbalance exists between children and adults. Specific efforts must be taken to ensure the voices of children are heard. Enabling and promoting the participation of children has many benefits including:
	+ demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children
	+ providing you with the opportunity to check that what the school is doing is actually what children want
	+ strengthening the commitment of children to the school
	+ building the communication and leadership skills of children
	+ building cultural understanding and respect
	+ enhancing the safety of children
* When children are respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. If children feel they cannot express themselves in the school, there is a risk that any harm that is occurring will remain undiscovered and ongoing.
* Becoming a child safe organisation means developing strategies to communicate and engage with all children who are involved with the school. It is important to ask children when they feel safe, and when they feel unsafe – their comments may surprise you.
* To create a true child safe organisation, it makes sense to ask those you are trying to protect when they feel safe and when they feel unsafe. Their comments and insight will always be different from the adult perspective. Well-intentioned people put policies and procedures aimed at protecting children in place, yet it is rare that children know these policies exist.
* Often children do not know what to do if they feel unsafe or are concerned about something.
* The concept of ‘safety’ is very broad and means different things to different people, especially children. It is much easier to understand the concept of ‘physical’ safety and the need for safe practices around hygiene, road and water safety, slippery surfaces, pool fencing, sign-in and sign-out procedures and staff supervision ratios. All of these contribute to the physical protection of children.
* In a child safe organisation, we also want to promote ‘psychological’ safety.
* Even if the physical environment is as safe as we can make it, when children feel unsafe, we need to understand why and respond to their needs. Psychological safety means children feel valued, respected and cared for. They know they can speak to people if they feel unsafe or unhappy, and that something will be done to address their concerns. Knowing this increases their self-esteem, which boosts their confidence and empowers them to speak up when necessary.
* Children also contribute valuable insight and ideas towards the creation of a meaningful child safe organisation. Children may be able to identify strengths, weaknesses, risks and dangers in activities that may not be identified by other methods.
* Children must be empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and understand it is not ‘okay’ and that they can do something about it.

**Purpose**

* To ensure Kent Park Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of [MO 870](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf).
* To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
* To ensure the school develops strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children that are compliant with the Child Safe Standard 7.
* To ensure the promotion of:
	+ the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
	+ the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
	+ the safety of children with a disability

**Implementation**

* The promotion of a child safe culture is this school’s highest priority.
* Over a period of time, children’s views will be sought by:
	+ consulting directly with children about what they think makes the school safe for them
	+ giving children age-appropriate information about the standards of care they are entitled to, particularly about their rights
	+ teaching children how to raise concerns, make complaints or let someone know they feel unsafe
	+ regularly checking with parents and children that they are aware of relevant child safe policies and procedures and that the child safety culture is visible.
* The school envisages that some of the strategies and possible outcomes will be:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Consulting & Talking with Children | Practical Suggestions | Possible Positive Outcomes |
| Establish what safety means to childrenAsk children when they feel safe and when they feel unsafe. | Ensure the physical environment is safe, warm and friendly towards children. | Children’s insight and responses will inform the development of the Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and complaints management process.The school will be alerted to any physical danger in the environment. |
| Educate children abouttheir rights | Run informal education sessions on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.Teach children that with every right they enjoy, they need to meet its correspondingresponsibility.Undertake activities on rights versus wants. | The children will understand their basic human rights and also understand they need to meet their responsibilities.The children will know the difference between a ‘right’ and a ‘want’. |
| Include children inpolicy development | Explain what the school is attempting to do and ask the children for their ideas,opinions and suggestions.Run small discussion groups and provide refreshments and activities. Give regular breaks. | The school will have a Child SafePolicy that children understand, and which represents their suggestions.Practical suggestions will be contributing to a physically safe environment. |
| Encourage children to develop their own Code of Conduct | Ask children what acceptable behaviour is and what is unacceptable behaviour. This includes behaviour of adults towards children, of children towards adults and of childrentowards children.Formulate a code of conduct using ‘DO’ and ‘DO NOT’ or ‘WE WILL’ and ‘WE WILL NOT’ statements. | The school will have a childfriendly Code of Conduct written by children for children.The school will have guidelinesfor staff and volunteers about their interactions, expected behaviour and relationships with children. |

* The school will utilise existing forums as well as providing other opportunities for input from children. Ideas from children will be sought formally by completion of the annual Student Attitude to School Survey, through the Student Representative Council which comprises children from Foundation (Prep) to Year 6 and through conversations with small groups lead by the Child Safe Officer and with class teachers.
* The school will encourage the participation of Aboriginal children if applicable, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability to participate in school forums.
* The school will know that Standard 7 has been successfully implemented when:
	+ reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible for all children
	+ children understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
	+ children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the school, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
	+ children feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
	+ children feel empowered to contribute to the school’s understanding and treatment of child safety
	+ children’s reports of concern are responded to appropriately
	+ staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation

**Evaluation**

Major evaluation of this document will be carried out by the Policy and Procedures Committee as part of the cyclic review process, in four years’ time or before, if the committee deems it necessary.

Approved Date: 07/12/2020 Review Date: 01/12/2024