



Child Safe POLICY and PROCEDURES

Cape Clear Primary School

Rationale: Cape Clear Primary School is committed to child safety.

Our school will abide by the Child Safety Standards:

Standard 1: Embedding a culture of child safety through effective leadership.

Standard 2: Making a commitment to child safety with a policy or statement.

Standard 3: Having a clear code of conduct that establishes appropriate behaviour with children.

Standard 4: Screening, supervision and training for staff, to reduce the risk of child abuse.

Standard 5: Clear processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Standard 6: Identifying child abuse risks and ways to reduce them.

Standard 7: Promoting the participation and empowerment of children.

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

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

Implementation:

Our children This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

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

Our staff and volunteers This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our child safety code of conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their

families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the child safety code of conduct.

Training and supervision Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability. New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. Through the selection process we clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We welcome 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. We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for personnel The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access.

Cape Clear Primary School is committed to Child Safety

Legislative responsibilities

1. Duty of Care

All school staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable injury to children and young people under the care. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect their safety, health and wellbeing. In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, reasonable steps may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable
- seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or agencies when the school staff member is unsure of what steps to take
- reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities such as Victoria Police and DHHS Child Protection
- arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child
- providing ongoing support to the child and young person – this may include attending DHHS Child

Protection Case Planning meetings, and convening regular Student Support Group meetings

- sharing information with other school based staff who will also be responsible for monitoring and providing ongoing support to the child or young person.

2. 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.

3. Failure to protect:

Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence. The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation. In a school context, this may include Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals.

4. Mandatory Reports

Mandatory reporters, who form reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable.

Mandatory reporters: teachers, principals, doctors, nurses, police officers

In cases where staff have concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person, they should also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.

	Duty of Care	Mandatory Reporter	Failure to Disclose	Failure to Protect
Parents	No	No	Yes	No
ES, Office Staff. Volunteers	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Principals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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

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

Allegations, concerns and complaints Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

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

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

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

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

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Cape Clear Primary School Policy: Ratified _____ Reviewed 2021

PROTECT

Protecting children & young people
from abuse is our responsibility

