



# CHILD SAFETY and WELLBEING POLICY

## CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2

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### PURPOSE

Mandama Primary School is committed to providing a safe, healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students. As a community we want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We want our students to be resilient, develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills. There is 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 meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. Our school is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, removing and reducing these risks. As a community 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 backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Mandama Primary School has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, casual relief staff, volunteers, and the school community to ensure:

- a collective responsibility for student wellbeing in all school related environments;
- we endeavour to provide successful experiences for all children, where a sense of belonging and wellbeing are strengthened;
- we empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. 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;
- children develop positive social behaviours and problem solving skills;
- staff are confident, skilled and proactive in the management of student wellbeing issues;
- communication processes and protocols are clear and well known to ensure the effectiveness of student wellbeing support.

### POLICY

Student safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between school, staff, students, home and the community and is primarily guided by the following health and wellbeing practice principles:

- Principle 1 - Maximise access and inclusion.
  - Principle 2 - Focus on outcomes.
  - Principle 3 - Evidence - informed and reflective practice.
  - Principle 4 - Holistic approach.
  - Principle 5 - Person- centred and family sensitive practice.
  - Principle 6 - Partnerships with families and communities.
  - Principle 7 - Cultural confidence.
  - Principle 8 - Commitment to excellence.
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- All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
  - The Assistant Principal will coordinate student safety and wellbeing across the school.
  - All staff are aware of the *Child Protection Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures* and their responsibilities. We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
  - A Child Safety Policy has been established. And endorsed by School Council.
  - The Child Safety Policy is provided for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings. This includes Non-teaching staff e.g. External Music teachers, Canteen Manager, ICT staff and Maintenance staff are also given the document.
  - All staff are given a copy of Ministerial Order 870.
  - Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website.

**CHILD ABUSE:** a definition:

Includes –

- a. Any act committed against a child involving –
  - A sexual offence; or
  - An offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- b. The infliction, on a child, of –
  - Physical violence; or
  - Serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- c. Serious neglect of a child.

See the Department's web portal [Protect: Identifying Signs of Child Abuse](#)

- Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations (*Refer to Child Protection Reporting Obligations /Mandatory Reporting Policy*).
- Our staff know the [Four Critical Actions - Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#). *Procedures are distributed to all staff and can be accessed on Staff Shared Drive/ Child Safe Policies and Procedures / Four Critical Actions.*
- All school staff undertake the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning module](#) annually. A register is kept by Office Staff to ensure all staff complete this training.
- Mandama Primary School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- The school will adopt a proactive and strategic stance with issues of student wellbeing, rather than operating in a consistently reactive mode.
- The school will implement wellbeing support structures and programs which prioritise and address the identified needs of individual students or the school as a whole and that help implement the aims of the policy. Refer to the *Code of Conduct, Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy*
- All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.
- **The school will endeavour to implement and maintain programs such as: -**
  - Learning for Life Program
  - Starting & Continuing Right.
  - Brave Hearts program
  - Anti-Bullying Programs e.g. Sticks and Stones Productions, Bully Stoppers Teachers can access the DET Step by Step Teacher Guides on Bullying - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/prinsteps.aspx>
  - Restorative Practices – check in and check out circles regularly
  - Seasons Program.
  - Calmer Classrooms.
  - Buddies program- Prep with Year 5
  - Student Awards, relating to school values.
  - Drug Education.
  - Cyber Safety programs.
  - Transition programs.
  - WOW program.
  - Recess and Lunch clubs.
  - Weekly student wellbeing meetings with AP, Student Welfare Officer, PSD Coordinator.
- Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- We take 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 organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- 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. (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).

**The school will provide the following support structures:**

- Monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences.
- Trauma Management plan.
- Protocol for Mandatory Reporting and other reporting obligations.
- Student Support Groups for children in need.
- Safety Audits.
- Student Behaviour Tracker- Compass
- Behaviour will be monitored and discussed regularly at Unit Meetings, and if required, at Leadership Team Meetings.
- Staff will continuously self-reflect on their implementation of Mandama's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Yard behaviour will be monitored daily by the yard duty teachers. Positive behaviours will be acknowledged and entered on Compass. Unacceptable behaviour will be addressed and recorded at the time of the incident on an incident slip and then entered on Compass.
- Compass wellbeing entries will be reviewed by Leadership on a regular basis with trends, hot-spots and repeated offences measured for the purpose of monitoring our student wellbeing throughout the school.

**The school will also access outside services to provide support for students and staff which include:**

- Network School Support Services Officers and Visiting Teachers.
- Providing support for 'at risk' children, including teacher guidance and counselling.
- Department of Human Services case managers and support workers.
- Relevant DET support staff.
- School Nurse.

**The school will endeavour to cater for children identified with specific welfare issues by:**

- Creating support groups.
- Developing Individual Learning Improvement Plans (ILPS) which may include reference to behaviour goals and Behaviour Management Plans.
- Monitoring performance and behaviour.
- Providing ongoing support.

**RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS:**

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide - Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)
- [DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework](#)

## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Victorian Government, Education and Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No. 870
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) Information Sheet. Child Safe Standard 2: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- eLearning module: [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#)
- State of Victoria (2010) Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools

## REVIEW CYCLE:

This policy was last updated on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and is scheduled for review in August, 2020.

## APPENDIX

### **VRQA CHILD SAFE STANDARDS:**

#### **STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**

- All school policies outline staff responsibilities to keep students safe.
- Employment of a Student Welfare Officer is a priority.
- Establishment of a Student Welfare committee which meets weekly.
- Safe School signs are attached to all perimeter fences directing visitors to the office.
- All adults sign in and wear lanyards to identify them whilst they are in the school.
- The school newsletter is only available through COMPASS – a secure site for parents/carers – and not for general distribution.
- Class Blogs and Weeblys are password protected for parents/carers and students.
- Staff and Students regularly practice lock down procedures.
- Security cameras have been installed around the school.
- All staff receive the Staff handbook each year.

#### **STANDARD 2: A child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety.**

- A Child Safety Policy has been established.
- The Child Safety Policy is provided for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings. This includes Non-teaching staff e.g. External Music teachers, Canteen Manager, ICT staff and Maintenance staff are also given the document.
- All staff are given a copy of Ministerial Order 870.
- A Child Safe Policy has been created and endorsed by School Council.
- Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website.

#### **STANDARD 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**

- A Child Safety Code of Conduct has been established.
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct is provided for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings. This includes Non-teaching staff e.g. External Music teachers, ICT staff and Maintenance staff are also given the document.
- All staff are given a copy of Ministerial Order 870, VIT Code of Conduct, and Extract Memo 199
- A Child Safe Code of Conduct has been created and endorsed by School Council.
- Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website.

#### **STANDARD 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**

- Staff induction program includes information regarding child safety encompassing matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers which clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant.
- CRT are required to provide VIT registration which is recorded. CRT lists are presented to School Council every year and are checked against the DET data base.
- 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.

- External organisations working with students (eg: Police Officers, Speech Pathologists, NDIS workers) at our school are always supervised by a staff member or parent/carer.
- Professional Development is provided for staff in regards to trauma, abuse, behavioural issues, and disabilities. (*See Professional Development Policy*)
- The Child Safety Code of conduct is publicly available on the school website. Children and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

**STANDARD 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.**

- The School's Child Protection Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) policy is followed and reviewed regularly by staff.
- Staff update their knowledge via an on-line course every year.
- The Student Welfare Officer and AP will support staff to make mandatory reports.
- Staff are given contact details for Family First, DHHS, and Geelong Police.

**STANDARD 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.**

- Teachers accompany students to and from specialist classrooms.
- Students always move around the school in pairs.
- Security cameras have been installed around the school.

**STANDARD 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.**

- Regular reference to the Positive Behaviour Matrix
- Brave Hearts program
- Anti-bullying programs e.g. Sticks and Stones.
- Student Welfare Officer
- Puberty program
- Passive play room run by the Student Welfare Officer
- Anti-bullying audit conducted for years 5/6