



# HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE

## CHILD SAFE STANDARD NO 4

### PURPOSE

At Mandama Primary School we foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target schools. We believe that robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing risks of child abuse. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training, supervision and management of performance of all personnel.

### SCOPE

To achieve this, we provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This policy refers to teaching and non-teaching staff as well as anyone employed through School Council. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

### RECRUITMENT

Recruitment processes at Mandama help ensure the best applicants are employed. From advertising through to conducting interviews and checking the background of applicants, it is important that each step is done consistently and thoroughly. Mandama Primary School adheres to the following recruitment practices as outlined by the Department of Education Human Resources - Recruitment in Schools Guidelines (updated 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2018)

The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide requires that position descriptions for all new positions advertised include the following standard 'Child safe environments' clause:

*"Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our school actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website."*

Mandama will also inform applicants that appropriate rigorous reference and background checking will be undertaken, including a Working with children check and police record and identity check.

Statements included in the advertisement:

- This school promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability.
- This school promotes the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, and encourages applications from Aboriginal peoples.
- This school promotes the safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and encourages applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**It is the responsibility of the school council to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. In delegating its employment powers to the Principal, the following practices will be undertaken. Prior to employment, the Principal will ensure that school council pre-employment requirements are understood and checked and be satisfied that the applicant:**

- has had a Working with Children Check and an Assessment Notice or, for teaching positions, the person is registered or has permission to teach from the Victorian Institute of Teaching under Part 2.6 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006;
- is an Australian citizen or a permanent resident in Australia under any law of the Commonwealth or entitled to permanent residency in Australia under any law of the Commonwealth or is entitled to be resident in Victoria for sufficient periods to enable the person to undertake the duties of the position;
- is a fit and proper person to be an employee as required by Ministerial Order 1038, and is suitable for child-connected work as defined in Ministerial Order 870;

- has fulfilled such qualification requirements as are in effect at the time;
- meets the pre-employment medical requirements; and
- does not have any employment or re-employment restrictions issued by the Department of Education and Training. To ascertain this, a pre-employment check is done on eduPay. Any enquiries arising from this check will be made to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch.

Letters of Offer for all school-based positions include a reference to the offer being subject to the person being suitable for child-connected work (Forms-teaching service page on HRWeb).

**To ensure the school implements practices for a child-safe environment each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child-connected work will have a clear statement that sets out:**

- the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
- the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
- All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).

**The school will gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:**

- Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
- proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
- the person's history of work involving children; and
- references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

*(refer to the Working With Children Act 2005 which establishes a process to screen persons engaging or intending to engage in child-related work through a working with children check, and also sets out exemptions from that requirement for volunteers, parents and others.)*

**The principal will ensure reasonable efforts are made to contact the person's current or immediate past employer (which cannot be the school making the offer of employment) and ask questions from the following list:**

- Have you directly observed [applicant's name] work with children?
- During the period that [applicant's name] worked in your organisation, did you have any concerns about [applicant's name] behaviour or conduct when working with a child or children? If yes, what steps were taken to deal with these concerns? Were these concerns satisfactorily resolved?
- Do you have any concerns about [applicant's name] working directly with children?
- Has any disciplinary action been taken against the applicant in relation to inappropriate or unprofessional conduct towards a child?
- Were there instances where you had concerns that [applicant's name] did not always behave with integrity in their employment, such as not dealing with others in an ethical manner, not declaring or managing a conflict of interest appropriately or not dealing with sensitive or confidential information in an appropriate way? If yes, what steps were taken to deal with these concerns? Were these concerns satisfactorily resolved?

*Where the responses to these questions raise any concerns with the principal in relation to the person's suitability for employment, before taking any further action in relation to that person's employment, the principal must seek advice from the Employee Conduct Branch.*

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Developing appropriate selection criteria for a school position is a valuable first step to reducing the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. It will also ensure that applicants have the specific knowledge and skills required for the position.

Our school will ensure that the selection criteria provides for the safety of all children. Applicants will have the opportunity to indicate their understanding of, or any experience they have in working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds. The selection criteria will clearly state the following:

- A 'Must have experience working with children' statement
- 'Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children' statement
- The experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant
- Outline the supervision and accountability processes in place which support child safety
- Include a demonstration of the needs of children with a disability
- Include a demonstration of Aboriginal cultural safety and awareness, and for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

## SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR ALL STAFF

Mandama Primary School reinforces our commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

- For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Child Safe Standard 3.
- Child Safe environment and wellbeing is discussed and minuted in school staff meetings, leadership meetings and school council meetings.
- All staff are made aware of the child safe clause now included for all job categories '**Provide a child safe environment in accordance with the child safe standards'**.. (Principal class, Teacher, Paraprofessional and Education Support) in the Roles and Responsibilities- Teaching Service - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/rolesTS.asp>
- All Child Safe Policies are accessible on Staff Shared Drive and are regularly referred to in meetings and in the Mandama Teacher Handbook.
- Induction of new school staff includes support and training to ensure understanding and the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work.
- All Mandama staff complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning module](#) annually. Staff must present their certificate of completion to Office Staff.
- All Staff can access Child Safety Resources on Staff Shared Drive, including information and instructions on the 4 critical actions to take when a disclosure or suspicion of child abuse has occurred.
- A dedicated Buildings and Grounds sub- committee meet regularly to ensure Mandama is a child safe environment.
- Office Staff ensure all records of suitability to work at Mandama, including volunteers, contractors and CRTs are maintained.
- Consultation and approval by School Council of Mandama's commitment and procedures to ensure all Child Safe Standards are met every two years.

## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Commission for Children and Young People: [Being a Child Safe Organisation](#)
- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Victorian Government Gazette: Managing the Risk of Child](#)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority: [Child Safe Standards Resources](#)

Induction processes/policy include the following updates:

- New Teacher Induction Plan Checklist for Principals
- Guide for Beginning teachers 2016
- Principal's Induction Guide

All updated Induction related material is housed on the Principal's portal and/or the Induction homepage.

## REVIEW CYCLE

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