



CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

This school endeavours to promote a safe, healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students to raise awareness of what makes students resilient, develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills. 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 zero tolerance of child abuse. Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

AIMS:

- To create a positive, safe environment in which all staff assume responsibility for student wellbeing in all school related environments.
- Staff 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 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 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.
- 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. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

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.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- 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.
- 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 Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures and their responsibilities. (Refer to Mandatory Reporting Policy). We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

- 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 (Refer to *Mandatory Reporting Policy*).
- Our organisation 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: -
 - Starting & Continuing Right.
 - Brave Hearts program
 - Anti-Bullying Programs eg: Sticks and Stones Productions
 - 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.
 - Transition programs.
 - School Chaplaincy Program.
 - Recess and Lunch clubs.
 - Passive play room run by our Student Welfare Officer
 - Weekly student wellbeing meetings with AP, chaplain, BSW Network representative and PSD Coordinator.

Our organisation 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.)
- We take responsibility for the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work.

The school will provide the following support structures:

- Monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences.
- Trauma Management plan.
- Protocol for Mandatory Reporting.
- Student Support Groups for children in need.
- Safety Audit.
- Student Behaviour Tracker.

- 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 (ILIPS) which may include reference to behaviour goals and Behaviour Management Plans.
- Monitoring performance and behaviour.
- Providing ongoing support.

CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS:

This policy sits within a framework that includes a number of policies and resources aimed at implementing each of the Child Safety Standards within our school.

- Appendix 1 outlines the school's additional procedures and strategies for each standard.
- Appendix 2 outlines Child Safety definitions
- Appendix 3 outlines the Roles and Responsibilities of the Child Safety team
- Appendix 4 outlines strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Appendix 5 – Related policies and documents.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, or at any time that DET policy changes influence practices in schools.

Ratified at School Council Meeting held July 25th, 2016.

APPENDIX 1 : VROA CHILD SAFE STANDARDS:

In complying with the child safe standards organisations 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.

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 Weebly's 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 eg: 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 created and endorsed by School Council.
- 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 eg: External Music teachers, Canteen Manager, ICT staff and Maintenance staff are also given the document.
- All staff and volunteers sign the Child Safety code of Conduct and these are kept at the school.
- All staff are given a copy of Ministerial Order 870, VIT Code of Conduct, and Extract Memo 199
- 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 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, DHS, and Geelong Police.
- Incident report proformas are used by anyone making a report.

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.
- Risk assessment chart has been completed and will be regularly reviewed.

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

- Regular reference to the Positive Behaviour Matrix
- Focus on Restorative Practices
- Brave Hearts program
- Anti bullying programs eg: 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

APPENDIX 2 - CHILD SAFETY STANDARD DEFINITIONS:

- Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

Child abuse includes—

- any act committed against a child involving:
- a sexual offence or
- an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:
- physical violence or
- serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.
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Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

APPENDIX 3 - ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

Key activities of the school child safety team and the officer/leader role

The team and school leader responsible for child safety has sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate), to undertake the role effectively.

The Child Safety Team consists of-

- School Leadership Team including the school principal
- Student Wellbeing Officer
- Business Manager

All members of the team have a major role in fulfilling the responsibilities of the Child Safety Standards.

Broad areas of the role are to:

1. Provide authoritative advice
 - Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
 - Maintain the visibility of child safety.
 - Lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.
2. Raise awareness
 - Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
 - Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
 - Ensure the Mandatory Reporting Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
 - Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
 - Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.
3. Train
 - Being authoritative in providing advice by:
 - keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years
 - having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
 - Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
 - Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
 - Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

APPENDIX 4 - STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE OR REMOVE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE

Child Safe Standard 6 (Standard 6) requires schools to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

A child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety.

- **Assess, identify and document** the school's risks in relation to child safety, and plan and document risk management strategies where necessary.
- **Incorporate** risk management actions and responsibilities in the **Action Plan**
- **Identify** the actions the school proposes to take to ensure a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 6:

“(1) The school governing authority must develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environments.

(2) The school’s risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

(3) If the school governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

(4) As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school governing authority must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

(5) At least annually, the school governing authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:

- a) individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;*
- b) child abuse risks in the school environment; and*
- c) the school’s current child safety standards.”*

Process for identifying and reducing or removing risks of child abuse.

While risk management assessments and strategies will vary for each school, managing risk typically involves the following steps and considerations.

1. Identify the school’s child safety risks across the range of school environments (including excursions, camps, online).
2. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures or internal controls.
3. Assess and rate the school’s child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.

APPENDIX 5 - RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Related Mandama School Policies-

- Mandatory Reporting
 - Incident Reporting proforma
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Critical Incident Plan
 - Duty of Care
 - E-Smart Policy (ICT)
 - Student Engagement and Inclusion
 - Working with Children procedures
 - Visitors
- [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST](#)
 - Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation*, Version 2.0.
 - (DET) Department of Education and Training (2016) *School Policy Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy* , and associated tools:
 - School risk register which can be edited and has automatic tools embedded is available, see: [Risk Management in Schools – Risk Register](#).
 - Subordinate risk registers for specific activities such as overseas travel/excursions or projects, see: [Risk Management in Outdoor Education – Education Outdoor tools](#).
 - Online risk management module: [Risk Management - Online Risk Module](#)
 - [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
 - [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module (log-in required)
 - 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 and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children’s Services and Victorian Schools.
 - Victorian Government, Education & 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 Qualifications Authority (2016) *Child Safety Standard 6: Child safety risk management strategies*
 - (DET) Department of Education and Training (2016) *School Policy Advisory Guide*:
 - DET School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>
 - DET School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/childprotection.aspx>
 - DET School Policy & Advisory Guide-Child Wellbeing and Safety
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/wellbeing.asp>
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/safetymgt.aspx>
 - DET School Policy & Advisory Guid- Privacy Policy
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/requestinfo.aspx>

This policy has been informed by information from-

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards

Further information

- Further information on [child safe standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>.
- Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, [An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](#), has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>
- **Note for registered schools:** a forthcoming Ministerial Order under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* will contain the minimum actions that schools must take to meet each of the child safe standards. There will be a lead in time before regulation will commence to allow schools time to prepare. The Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority will provide information and materials specifically for schools to assist with capacity building and compliance.
- **Registered schools** can contact the Department of Education and Training: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Early childhood services operating under the *National Quality Framework* or *Children's Services Act 1996* should contact: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415