

Child Safe Policy

Clarinda Primary School



Clarinda Primary School is committed to child safety. 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 school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers, and we are committed to providing a safe environment for all children.

Aims:

Our children

This policy is intended to protect and empower children in our school. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

Our staff and volunteers

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

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct, which is set out in our Staff Information Handbook.

Implementation:

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our 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. Staff are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements that 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.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers that will be in unsupervised contact with children either on or off school premises, and contractors on school premises that will come into unsupervised contact with children, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information

We carry out reference checks for new staff applying for positions at our school and VIT registration is compulsory for teachers.

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to staff. 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 including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

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 kept confidential. For example, any incidents or investigations are kept confidential from School Council and from staff that are not involved in the relevant incident or investigation.

Legislative responsibilities

Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Any staff who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.** This means that our teachers must report to child protection authorities if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.
- **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 in our school (such as the Principal and other senior school staff) 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.

Risk management

In Victoria, schools 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, taking into account the nature of the relevant school environment (e.g. on or off school grounds) and the activities to be conducted (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations). Where any risk of child abuse is identified, the School Council must review, approve, record and monitor the risk controls in relation to such risks.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to handle matters thoroughly and quickly. Our staff 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. This is set out in our Staff Information Handbook and Student Engagement Policy.

Evaluation and Review

School Council, as the governing body, is responsible for overseeing the implementation and embedding of effective child safe practice in the school. This Policy will be reviewed as part of the school's cyclical review process, or following significant incidents if they occur.

Child Safe Standards:

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, organisations must have:

- **Standard 1** - strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- **Standard 2** - a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- **Standard 3** - a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- **Standard 4** - screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- **Standard 5** - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- **Standard 6** - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- **Standard 7** - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

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.

Introduction

- This policy is underlying the broad Clarinda Primary School Values statement which is the cornerstone of all of our work at the school.
- The protection of children and young persons is the responsibility of everyone who works at Clarinda Primary School, including its staff, contractors, parents and volunteers. We all share responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children.
- Clarinda Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and to keeping them safe at all times.

Commitment

Clarinda Primary School and its School Council are committed to:

- our children being safe, happy and empowered
- supporting and respecting all children, as well as our staff and volunteers
- a zero tolerance to child abuse
- our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously
- the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks
- promoting and empowering child safety in its school environment
- ensuring the safety and best interests of the children in its care, taking into account children of cultural and linguistic diversity and those with disabilities
- implementing and continuously improving procedures and systems that promote and influence an organisational culture of child safety and that provides a safe environment for our students
- ensuring child safety is about balancing expectations and complying with legal obligations. It is not about creating an atmosphere of suspicion.
- robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers

- regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
- 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
- specific policies, procedures and training 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

Child Safety - Governance and Effective Leadership

Standard 1

The child safe standards require schools to have strategies to embed a school culture of child safety, including effective leadership arrangements. Protecting children from abuse is everybody's business, and a school's leadership is essential to instilling a child safety culture.

Leadership in a child safe environment

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities. We 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 Clarinda Primary School 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. Clarinda Primary School fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. All staff and volunteers consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Governance in a child safe environment

Leadership takes preventative, proactive and participatory approaches to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children at Clarinda Primary School is paramount and given consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership responsibilities

Leadership is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety at Clarinda Primary School. Leadership takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, and is made aware of child abuse allegations and risks and takes responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response. Clarinda Primary School ensures that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

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

¹ For definitions of key terms, please see *An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards*:

Identify and analyse risk of abuse

Clarinda Primary School adopts an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how we identify, assess, and the steps taken to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

Develop a child safe policy

Clarinda Primary School has developed a child safe policy which outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

Develop codes of conduct

Clarinda Primary School has a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. We also refer to professional codes of conduct where appropriate i.e. DET and VIT documents.

Choose suitable employees and volunteers

Clarinda Primary School takes 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.

Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

Clarinda Primary School ensures 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. The Principal and Assistant Principal are persons in our school who have 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 abuse.

Promote inclusion

Clarinda Primary School is inclusive to all children and families. We have a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- 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.
- Single and same sex families.

Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making

Clarinda Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. For example, we provide opportunities for children to express their views on our child safe policy and code of conduct, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through suggestions from the Junior School Council, or feedback sessions.

We listen to children and take them seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.

Links which are connected with this policy are:

Commitment to child safety policy (Child safe standard 2).docx

Child safe code of conduct (Child safe standard 3).docx

Human resources practices (Child safe standard 4).docx

Mandatory reporting practices (Child safe standard 5).docx

Mandatory Reporting Incident Report sheet (Child safe standard 5).docx

Identifying and reducing the risk of child abuse (Child safe standard 6).docx

Promoting student voice (Child safe standard 7).docx

Further information

Further information on child safe standards 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-andfamily-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:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-andlegislation/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

Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au

Commitment to Child Safety Policy

Standard 2

Clarinda Primary School's Commitment to Child Safety

Clarinda Primary School is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

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.

Clarinda Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Clarinda Primary School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Clarinda Primary School 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 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.

Our Children

This policy is intended to 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.

We promote diversity and tolerance in school, 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.

- Promote the acceptance of same sex families.

Our Staff and Volunteers

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

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our 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 code of conduct.

Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our 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; 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 school'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.

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.

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. Please see the Working with Children Check website for further information.

We carry out reference 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.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern.

We are also 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 in the filing cabinet in the Assistant Principal's office.

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 to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

Our school takes our 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 in our school 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.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Risk Management

In Victoria, schools 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).

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years and following significant incidents if they occur.

We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

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.

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).

¹ Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the Department of Justice and regulation website.

² *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. See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about how to make a report to child protection.*

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes

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.

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 means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)..

School governing authority means:

- The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
- The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or

- The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

References and Resources

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 Qualification Authority (2016) Information Sheet. CHILD SAFETY STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety.

Child Safety – Code of Conduct

Standard 3

Clarinda Primary School's Commitment to Child Safety

Clarinda Primary School is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

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.

Clarinda Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Clarinda Primary School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Clarinda Primary School 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 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.

Our Children

This policy is intended to 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.

We promote diversity and tolerance in school, 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.
- Promote the acceptance of same sex families.

Our Staff and Volunteers

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

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our 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 code of conduct.

Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our 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; 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 school'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.

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.

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. Please see the Working with Children Check website for further information.

We carry out reference 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.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern.

We are also 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 in the filing cabinet in the Assistant Principal's office.

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 to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

Our school takes our 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 in our school 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.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Risk Management

In Victoria, schools 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).

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years and following significant incidents if they occur.

We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

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.

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).

¹ Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the Department of Justice and regulation website.

² 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. See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about how to make a report to child protection.

Clarinda Primary School is committed to child safety.

Principles for adult's behaviour in undertaking child-connected work

Some simple principles should guide an adult's behaviour when undertaking child-connected work such as:

- the adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- an adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child
- an adult should not be alone with a child unless there is line of sight to other adults
- an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school.

Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours

The following list provides examples of statements about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours included in a school's code of conduct.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers and school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.
- Unacceptable behaviours

Staff and volunteers must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, 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

- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- 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 contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children

Child Safety – Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers and school council members of Clarinda Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of Clarinda Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Clarinda Primary School's child safe policy at all times / upholding Clarinda Primary School's statement of commitment to child safety at all time
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with same sex parents.
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to Clarinda Primary School's Child Safety Officer -Principal / leadership, and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to Clarinda Primary School's Child Safety Officer - Principal / leadership
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes

- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- 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, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate)
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Clarinda Primary School's Principal or Assistant Principal

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

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child Safety – Human Resources Practices

Standard 4

Robust recruitment processes 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.

Selection criteria

Using DET approved criteria 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 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.

Advertising

Advertisement placement provides a good opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding children and deter would-be offenders.

Positions vacant are advertised on the DET Recruitment online to ensure suitable candidates apply.

The school summary in the advertisement includes a statement which shows our commitment to promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability.

‘Clarinda Primary School promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children with a disability.’

‘Clarinda Primary School promotes the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, and encourages applications from Aboriginal peoples. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with Aboriginal children and/or communities.’

‘Clarinda Primary 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 background. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.’

Interviews

The interview process is a very important step in selecting the right people for our school and in identifying any people who may pose a risk to children.

Sufficient time to plan and prepare for the interview process, and form an interview panel with the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview is required. Where possible / necessary, consideration of including Aboriginal peoples, people from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and people with a disability on the interview panel.

We use open-ended style behavioural-based questions, which give us insight into the applicant’s values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability.

‘Tell us about why you want to work with children?’

'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?'

'Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?'

Consideration of panel member's thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant are important. We ask for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.

We need to take note in –

- Unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history
- The applicant says they do not value or 'need' supervision
- The applicant is evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers

Pre-employment screening

Applicants are screened (including for paid and volunteer positions) as per DET Guidelines and VIT expectations.

Checks take the form of -

- Police checks
- Working with Children Check
- Referee checks

When speaking with the referees, we seek to establish the referee's relationship with the applicant, including:

- how long the applicant and referee worked together
- the specifics of the position
- the applicant's perceived strengths and weaknesses
- whether the referee would hire the person again, particularly in a role working with children, and whether they have any concerns about the applicant working with children.

Ask behaviour-based questions like:

- What did the applicant do when, [for example, they had to comfort a distressed child]?'
- 'Do you have any concerns about the applicant's attitude towards Aboriginal peoples / people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds / people with a disability?'
- 'Do you have any concerns about the applicant working with children?'
- 'Would you employ this person again?'

Probation periods

Probation periods can help you assess a new staff member's performance and suitability for the job before confirming their permanent employment. If you have any concerns about the person working with children, you should seriously consider whether you want them to remain in the job and your organisation.

The probation period of 3 months is in line with DET regulations.

Consideration should be given as to whether the person should receive closer supervision and additional training throughout the probation period. A probation period can offer an opportunity to set goals with new staff members and identify training, supervision and other support needs

Overview

It is important for schools to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse.

Clarinda Primary School will foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as be aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific schools. Robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, Clarinda Primary School will provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. 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.

Child safety officer

Employees and volunteers will be supported through the Principal and / or Assistant Principal, who are the designated persons to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and provide support to other personnel. This will assist Clarinda Primary School in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with legal requirements, school policies / statements and procedures.

The designated persons also provide contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with Clarinda Primary School.

Training and induction

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will be supported and informed when they begin their new role, and existing staff might need to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

Training and support also promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that the school meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

It is essential that our staff commit to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by acknowledging our school's code of conduct. Training should enhance the skills and knowledge of our employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

Employees and volunteers working with children will receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- understanding our policies and procedures (including the code of conduct and child safe policy)
- knowledge of legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse¹, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse², and to hold Working with Children Checks³ where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
- cultural awareness training.

Training can be formal such as:

- higher education training and accreditation
- training offered by external organisations

- training developed and delivered internally
- online 'Mandatory Reporting' unit

Training can also be informal such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching.

Supervision

Supervision of employees and volunteers will be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members should be present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision.

As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including the school's internal reporting procedures (such as the Principal and / or Assistant Principal, the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

¹ *The failure to disclose criminal offence requires adults in Victoria to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child (unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so). More information about failure to disclose is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website*

<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-disclose-offence>

Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting obligations. Certain professionals are mandatory reporters, meaning they are required to report to the Department of Health and Human Services if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical and sexual abuse. More information about mandatory reporting is available in the Child protection manual

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/intake/overview-of-intake-of-reports-under-the-children,-youth-and-families-act/1122-mandatory-and-other-required-reporting

² *The failure to protect criminal offence applies to people within organisations who knew of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so. More information about failure to protect is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website*

<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to>

³ For more information about Working with Children checks visit the working with children website

www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Performance and development review

A proactive performance development strategy will be used to improve employees and volunteers skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance will be measured against the school's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards will align with those of the code of conduct and child safe policy / statement, so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures

Clarinda Primary School has a code of conduct and student Engagement Policy that provide services for children can use which outlines expected standards of appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children.

Disciplinary procedures will occur if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Disciplinary procedures will be accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct.

Employees and volunteers should be aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within the school.

Members of our school community should also be made aware (via the school fortnightly newsletter) of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Clarinda Primary School's code of conduct and Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy will be publicly available via our school website. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Our disciplinary procedures will clearly outline what employees or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

Responding to allegations of suspected child abuse

Standard 5

Rationale

Mandatory reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection.

All other school staff who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of:

- protection are encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.
- therapeutic treatment is encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection.

If staff has significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person they are encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.

In cases where staff has concerns about a child or young person, they will discuss their concerns with the Principal or a member of the school leadership team (School Improvement Team - SIT).

1. Aim

This policy aims to:

- Define the roles and responsibilities of school staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Enable staff to identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- Enable staff to make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.

2. Implementation

Mandatory Reporting:

Mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child

Mandatory Reporters should report to the Department of Human Services Child Protection

Who is mandated?

- Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach pursuant to the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Principals of government and non-government schools
- Registered medical practitioners
- Nurses
- All members of the police force

Child in Need of Protection:

Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:

- The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.
- The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care

What is physical child abuse?

Physical child abuse can consist of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. Examples of physical abuse may include beating, shaking or burning, assault with implements and female genital mutilation (FGM).

PHYSICAL indicators of physical child abuse include (but are not limited to):

- bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, e.g. back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs
- bruises or welts in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury, e.g. fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth
- burns from boiling water, oil or flames or burns that show the shape of the object used to make them, e.g. iron, grill, cigarette
- fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs (especially those not consistent with the explanation offered, or the type of injury possible at the child's age of development)
- cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears and external genitalia
- bald patches where hair has been pulled out
- multiple injuries, old and new
- effects of poisoning
- internal injuries

Behavioural indicators of physical child abuse:

- disclosure of an injury inflicted by someone else (parent, carer or guardian), or an inconsistent or unlikely explanation or inability to remember the cause of injury
- unusual fear of physical contact with adults
- aggressive behaviour
- disproportionate reaction to events
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- wariness or fear of a parent, carer or guardian
- reluctance to go home
- no reaction or little emotion displayed when being hurt or threatened
- habitual absences from school without reasonable explanation
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative
- unusually nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self and/or others
- poor sleeping patterns, fear of the dark or nightmares and regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting
- drug or alcohol misuse, suicide or self-harm.

What is child sexual abuse?

Child sexual abuse:

- is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity
- can include a wide range of sexual activity including fondling the child's genitals, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

Child sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact (e.g. kissing or fondling a child in a sexual way, masturbation, oral sex or penetration) and can also include non-contact offences, for example:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- sending sexual messages or emails to a child
- exposing a sexual body part to a child
- forcing a child to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to a child)
- having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation).

Child sexual abuse does not always involve force. In some circumstances a child may be manipulated into believing that they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love, through a process of grooming.

Who is most at risk of child sexual abuse?

Any child can be victim to sexual abuse, however children who are vulnerable, isolated and/or have a disability are much more likely to become victim, and are disproportionately abused. Perpetrators can include (but are not limited to):

- a family member (this is known as intra family abuse and can include sibling abuse) a school staff member, coach or other carer a peer/child 10 years or more in age* a family friend or stranger a person via a forced marriage (where a student is subject to a marriage without their consent, arranged for by their immediate or extended family - this constitutes a criminal offence and must be reported).

**Unwanted sexual behaviour toward a student by a person 10 years or over can constitute a sexual offence and is referred to as student-to-student sexual offending.*

Please note that a child who is under 10 years of age is not considered to be capable of committing an offence. Any suspected sexual behaviours by children under 10 is referred to as problem sexual behaviour.

PHYSICAL indicators of sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- injury to the genital or rectal area, e.g. bruising, bleeding, discharge, inflammation or infection
- injury to areas of the body such as breasts, buttocks or upper thighs
- discomfort in urinating or defecating
- presence of foreign bodies in the vagina and/or rectum
- sexually-transmitted diseases
- frequent urinary tract infections
- pregnancy, especially in very young adolescents
- anxiety-related illnesses, e.g. anorexia or bulimia.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- disclosure of sexual abuse, either directly (from the alleged victim) or indirectly (by a third person or allusion)
- persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity, e.g. excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults
- drawings or descriptions in stories that are sexually explicit and not age-appropriate
- fear of home, specific places or particular adults
- poor/deteriorating relationships with adults and peers

- poor self-care or personal hygiene.
- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis
- sleeping difficulties
- regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting or speech loss
- depression, self-harm, drug or alcohol abuse, prostitution or attempted suicide
- sudden decline in academic performance, poor memory and concentration
- promiscuity
- wearing layers of clothing to hide injuries and bruises.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators for perpetrators of child sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

Family Member (adult)

- attempts by one parent to alienate their child from the other parent
- overprotective or volatile relationship between the child and one of their parents/ family members
- reluctance by the child to be alone with one of their parents/family members.

Family Member (sibling)

- the child and a sibling behaving like boyfriend and girlfriend
- reluctance by the child to be alone with a sibling
- embarrassment by siblings if they are found alone together.

School staff member, coach or other carer

- touching a child inappropriately
- bringing up sexual material or personal disclosures into conversations with a student/s
- inappropriately contacting the student/s, e.g. calls, emails, texts, social media
- obvious or inappropriate preferential treatment of the student/s (making them feel “special”)
- giving of gifts to a student/s
- having inappropriate social boundaries, e.g. telling the potential victims about their own personal problems etc.
- offering to drive a student/s to or from school
- inviting themselves over to their homes, calling them at night
- befriending the parents themselves and making visits to their home
- undermining the child’s reputation (so that the child won’t be believed).

What is grooming?

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for 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.

Sometimes it is hard to see when someone is being groomed until after they have been sexually abused, because some grooming behaviour can look like “normal” caring behaviour.

What is online grooming?

Online grooming is a criminal offence and occurs when an adult uses electronic communication (including social media) in a predatory fashion to try to lower a child’s inhibitions, or heighten their curiosity regarding sex, with the aim of eventually meeting them in person for the purposes of sexual activity. This can include online chats, sexting, and other interactions.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators that a child may be subject to grooming include (but are not limited to):

- developing an unusually close connection with an older person
- displaying mood changes (hyperactive, secretive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn,

depressed)

- using street/different language; copying the way the new 'friend' may speak; talking about the new 'friend' who does not belong to his/ her normal social circle
- possessing jewellery, clothing or expensive items given by the 'friend'
- possessing large amounts of money which s/he cannot account for
- using a new mobile phone (given by the 'friend') excessively to make calls, videos or send text messages
- being excessively secretive about their use of communications technologies, including social media
- frequently staying out overnight, especially if the relationship is with an older person
- being dishonest about where they've been and whom they've been with
- using drugs; physical evidence includes spoons, silver foil, 'tabs', 'rocks'
- assuming a new name; being in possession of a false ID, stolen passport or driver's license provided by the 'friend' to avoid detection
- being picked up in a car by the 'friend' from home/school or 'down the street'

What is emotional abuse?

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person, to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health.

Emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

PHYSICAL indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to):

- speech disorders such as language delay, stuttering or selectively being mute (only speaking with certain people or in certain situations)
- delays in emotional, mental or physical development

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to):

- overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour
- extremely demanding, aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour or anti-social and destructive behaviour
- low tolerance or frustration
- poor self-image and low self-esteem
- unexplained mood swings, depression, self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- behaviours that are not age-appropriate, e.g. overly adult, or overly infantile
- fear of failure, overly high standards, and excessive neatness
- poor social and interpersonal skills
- violent drawings or writing
- lack of positive social contact with other children

What is neglect?

Neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health or physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk

In some circumstances the neglect of a child:

- can place the child's immediate safety and development at serious risk
- may not immediately compromise the safety of the child, but is likely to result in longer term cumulative harm

PHYSICAL indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- appearing consistently dirty and unwashed

- being consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- being at risk of injury or harm due to consistent lack of adequate supervision from parents
- being consistently hungry, tired and listless
- having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care
- having inadequate shelter and unsafe or unsanitary conditions

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- gorging when food is available or inability to eat when extremely hungry
- begging for or stealing food
- appearing withdrawn, listless, pale and weak
- aggressive behaviour, irritability
- involvement in criminal activity
- little positive interaction with parent, carer or guardian
- poor socialising habits
- excessive friendliness towards strangers
- indiscriminate acts of affection
- poor, irregular or non-attendance at school
- staying at school for long hours and refusing or being reluctant to go home
- self-destructive behaviour
- taking on an adult role of caring for parent.

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert teachers to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

What is family violence?

Family violence can include physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional and physical abuse, sexual abuse and financial and social abuse. A child's exposure to family violence constitutes child abuse. This exposure can be very harmful and may result in long-term physical, psychological and emotional trauma. Action must be taken to protect the child, and to mitigate or limit their trauma.

PHYSICAL indicators of family violence include (but are not limited to):

- speech disorders
- delays in physical development
- failure to thrive (without an organic cause)
- bruises, cuts or welts on facial areas, and other parts of the body including back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs
- any bruises or welts (old or new) in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury
(such as fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth)
- internal injuries

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of family violence include (but are not limited to):

- violent/aggressive behaviour and language
- depression and anxiety and suicidal thoughts
- appearing nervous and withdrawn, including wariness of adults
- difficulty adjusting to change.
- psychosomatic illness
- bedwetting and sleeping disorders.

- ‘acting out’, such as cruelty to animals
- extremely demanding, attention-seeking behaviour
- participating in dangerous risk-taking behaviours to impress peers
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative behaviour
- taking on a caretaker role prematurely, trying to protect other family members
- embarrassment about family
- demonstrated fear of parents, carers or guardians, and of going home
- disengagement from school and/or poor academic outcomes
- parent-child conflict

For older children and young people indicators can also include:

- moving away/running away from home
- entering a relationship early to escape the family home
- experiencing violence in their own dating relationships
- involvement in criminal activity
- alcohol and substance abuse

Definitions of the different types of abuse – source :

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/progress/health/protect/Pages/schidentify.aspx>

Who should make the report?

- Any person (reports to DHS or Victoria Police)

Child in Need of Therapeutic Treatment:

Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child who is 10 years of age or over, but under 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually-abusive behaviours.

Who should make the report?

- Any person (report to DHS or Child FIRST)

DUTY OF CARE:

All members of Clarinda Primary School staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care.

If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care it is important to take immediate action.

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, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- Reporting their concerns to the DHS Child Protection or other appropriate agency (Child FIRST, Victoria Police)
- Notifying the Principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

TYPES OF ABUSE OR INDICATORS OF HARM

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child’s physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing. The younger a child the more vulnerable he/she is and the more serious the consequences are likely to be.

Types of child abuse include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- medical neglect
- family violence.

Other reports to DHS Child Protection may be needed for:

- risk-taking behaviour
- female genital mutilation
- unborn child
- child or young person exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours.

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert teachers to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

MAKING A REPORT

Clarinda Primary School should make a report in the follow way:-

1. Staff should keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:

- Description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)
- Source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)
- Actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with principal, report to DHS Child Protection).

2. School staff should discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the Principal or Assistant Principal or a member of the school leadership team. The individual staff member should then make their own assessment about whether they must or may make a report about the child or young person.

3. School staff should gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information:

- Full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person
- Details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns
- The individual staff member's involvement with the child and young person
- Details of any other agencies who may be involved with the child or young person

4. Make a report to the relevant agency

5. Make a written record of the report which includes the following information:

- The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported

The name and position of:

- the person who made the report
- the person who received the report

6. Notify relevant school staff and/or Departmental staff of the report.

- School staff should advise the Principal or a member of the leadership team if they have made a report.

- In the case of international students, the principal must notify the International Education Division of the Department on (03) 9637 2990 to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student.
- In the case of Koori students, the principal must notify the Regional Office to ensure that the regional Koori support officer can arrange appropriate support for the student.

7. Notify the Victoria Police if there is concern that a criminal offence may have been committed

CONSEQUENCES OF MAKING A REPORT Confidentiality:

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless

- The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or parent of the report.
- The reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed.
- A Court or Tribunal decides that it necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- A Court or Tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to provide evidence

Professional Protection:

If a report is made in good faith:

- it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter.
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report

Interviews:

DHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without the parent’s knowledge or consent.

Interviewing children and young people at school should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner.

DHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the Principal or a member of the leadership team of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises.

When DHS Child Protection practitioners/Victoria Police officers come to the school premises, the Principal or a member of the leadership team will request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person.

When a child or young person is being interviewed by DHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, school staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person.

Support for the young child or person:

The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children who are involved with DHS Child Protection may include the following:

- Acting as a support person for the child or young person.
- Attending DHS Child Protection case planning meetings.
- Observing and monitoring the child’s behaviour.
- Liaising with professionals.

Requests for information:

DHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST and/or Victoria Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.

In certain circumstances, DHS Child Protection can also direct school staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised persons within DHS Child Protection.

Witness Summons:

If DHS Child Protection makes a Protection Application in the Children’s Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a Witness Summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings.

3. Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every four years according to the policy review structure implemented by the Education Committee.

4. Resources

- DET website: Related Legislation –
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Crimes Act 1958
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001

CHILD SAFETY – INCIDENT REPORTING

All incident reports must be stored securely.

Incident details

<i>Date of incident:</i>	
<i>Time of incident:</i>	
<i>Location of incident:</i>	
<i>Name(s) of child/children involved:</i>	
<i>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</i>	

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

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No Yes, Aboriginal Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

- Physical violence
- Sexual offence
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse
- Serious neglect

Please describe the incident

<i>When did it take place?</i>	
<i>Who was involved?</i>	
<i>What did you see?</i>	
<i>Other information</i>	

Has the incident been reported?

<i>Child Protection:</i>	
<i>Police:</i>	
<i>Another third party (specify):</i>	

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No Yes

Name: _____

Signature: _____ *(Digital signature acceptable)*

Date: _____

Procedures when a disclosure is made

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you

- Try and separate them 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 you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do 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.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your principal or the school leadership team or child safety officer/champion¹, the police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

¹ *A child safety officer/champion is a person in your 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. You could consider including child safety officer/champion duties in the person's job description.*

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern

- Explain that we have 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 you will take notes 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 and / or Assistant Principal, the police or 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.

Students with special needs

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 can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website;

<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/communicate-and-consult-people-disability>

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

Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation 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 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).

More information about failure to disclose is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website

<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-disclose-offence>

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.

More information about mandatory reporting is available in the Child protection manual

www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting

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.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about how to make a report to child protection;

<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-report-child-protection>

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 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 child 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.

Further information about failure to protect can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation

Website;

<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to>

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY 2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES 3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS 4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **Internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or school chairperson
- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' must be reported as soon as possible to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- Employee Conduct Branch

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- Diocesan education office

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **Internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or chairperson.

For suspected student sexual assault, please follow the **Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending**.

OTHER CONCERNS

if you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you **must** still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:

- Child FIRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police.

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with well being professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to well being professionals and support.

You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.



CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA
North Division **1300 664 977**
South Division **1300 655 795**
East Division **1300 360 391**
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
West Division (Metro) **1300 664 977**

AFTER HOURS
After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 12 78**.

CHILD FIRST
<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>

ORANGE DOOR
<https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence/the-orange-door.html>

VICTORIA POLICE
000 or your local police station

DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE
1800 126 126

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT
1800 126 126

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH
(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE
Melbourne **(03) 5267 0228**
Ballarat **(03) 5337 7135**
Sale **(03) 5623 6600**
Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA
(03) 9825 7200

THE LOOKOUT
The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: <http://www.lookout.org.au>. Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.



CHILD SAFETY – RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Standard 6

Description

Clarinda Primary School has adopted a risk management approach which will identify and consider our student's safety risk(s) based on a range of factors including the nature of our activities with children, physical and online environments and the characteristics of children to whom we provide services. This covers both 'business as usual' risks and risks posed by specific activities such as excursions and overnight trips. Where risks are identified, Clarinda Primary School will employ measures to reduce or remove them.

Rationale

Clarinda Primary School has an active approach to our duty of care in protecting children and have a risk management approach and a commitment to continuous improvement. Additionally, the implementation of our risk management approach is recognition of Clarinda Primary School's legal responsibilities to ensure the safety of children.

How will Clarinda Primary School implement the 'Risk Management' approach-?

- Ensure clear and accessible processes for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities appropriate to the organisation, its size and resources, physical and online environments, and the characteristics of the children to whom it provides services.
- Develop, record and communicate clear processes for removing risks to children (for example, rules on online communications that could be included in the code of conduct or child safe policy, removing staff or volunteers who may pose a risk).
- Provide relevant staff and volunteers with training in identifying child abuse risks, for example blocked-off/out-of-sight spaces (especially rooms with doors that can be locked), overnight stays, and opportunities for physical contact, such as sports coaching and personal care.
- Engage methods for continual improvement in how risks are managed by learning from past lessons, including policy review and staff training.
- Ensure supervision requirements for staff and volunteers who work with children.
- Institute processes for periodic review of risk management approaches and/or processes and following any incidents.
- Recognise and adapt to the needs of particular children and communities, including Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability. For example, acknowledgement that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed for some children with a disability.
- Recognise and address risks to Aboriginal children which might exist because of their experiences, for example if a child does not feel safe identifying as Aboriginal, or if there is an inadequate response to self-identification.
- Recognise and address risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, which might exist because of their experiences, for example increased communication with families may be necessary to build trust and understanding of organisational activities.
- Recognise and address risks for children with a disability, for example communication barriers when telling an adult they feel unsafe.
- Have a central reporting and advisory contact for staff to raise concerns and get advice about what to do if they need to report suspected abuse, the Principal and / or the Assistant Principal.
- Include statements about shared responsibility for management of risks in all position descriptions.

- Have a consistent risk management approach across all areas of the school i.e. classrooms, offices etc.
- Include discussion about apparent risks or 'near misses' in staff and team meetings and areas for improvement.
- Roster staff with appropriate experience and qualifications to manage high risk environments.

Successfully implementing this approach should result in Clarinda Primary School being a place where:

- situational risks are considered and understood by all staff
- steps are put in place to reduce risks where possible
- risk management approaches are regularly reflected on and improved
- specific risks to Aboriginal children are identified, assessed and mitigated
- specific risks to children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background are identified, assessed and mitigated
- specific risks to children with a disability are identified, assessed and mitigated

CHILD SAFETY – PROMOTE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN

Standard 7

Description

Clarinda Primary School ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse.

Clarinda Primary School has simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety.

All staff have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

How Clarinda Primary School promotes participation and empowerment of children:

- We provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. Information is included in welcome packs, information sessions and posters, as well as on websites and social media. We have 'Life Education' van visit the school Bi – annually, their programs include safety for students issues.
- We ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children.
- We have access to professionals to translate information (including information about children's rights, child safe policies, statements of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages.
- We gather feedback from children, for example survey, focus groups, circle time, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and we then implement improvements based on this feedback.
- We enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. For example, views are gathered through suggestion boxes, feedback sessions, emails or surveys.
- We ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops, provide access to DET psych / Speech specialists, outsource specific cases to agencies – OnPsych, Family Life, Oz Child, DHS etc.
- We would ensure Aboriginal children were accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers would understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other organisational activities, such as organisational planning and decision making. For example – Student Leadership positions, Assembly presentations, Student Leadership Conferences, 'Junior Mayors' forum, student forums, SRC
- We raise awareness in the community about children's rights, through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites, newsletters, Information Evenings, Parent Teacher meetings, School Council, Parents & Friends etc.

By successfully implementing these strategies Clarinda Primary School ensures:

- 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 organisation, 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 organisation'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.

This policy was ratified by School Council on