

# Child Safe Policy

## Clarinda Primary School

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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](http://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 and Torres Strait Islander children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability and children who are vulnerable.

### **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 and Torres Strait Islander 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 and children who are vulnerable
- 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

#### **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed every 6 months or as required.

***This policy was ratified by School Council on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019***