



Child Safe Standard 2: Child Safety Policy – Whitfield District Primary School

Purpose

Whitfield District Primary School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

Definitions

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence; or
 - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence; or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety

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

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

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

School staff

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

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Whitfield District Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

“The school’s approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our school philosophy and values. At Whitfield District Primary School our vision is *‘Exceptional Educational Experiences.’* Our mission is *‘To provide a caring, stimulating and safe environment which guides students toward their full potential, in a dynamic learning environment, with a particular emphasis placed on the importance of English and Mathematics.’* We know children can struggle to achieve their personal best if they are not safe from abuse.

At Whitfield District Primary School our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

Respect

- Recognising and accepting the differences in ability, race, age, religion and beliefs of others.
- For our environment.

Learning

- Developing and acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes focusing on our personal best at all times.

Goal setting

- Awareness and development of personal goals, both academically and socially.

Teamwork

- Learning together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

Honesty

- Truthfulness and open communication in everything we do.

Communication

- Developing and practicing good communication and social skills.

Whitfield District Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, such as students in Out of Home Care.

Every person involved in Whitfield District Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Child safety principles

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Whitfield District Primary School will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such concerns;

8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

POLICY

Strategies to embed a child safe culture

Whitfield District Primary School's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available online at www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au and in hard copy in the School's Office for all staff and students to read at any time.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
 - Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
 - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
 - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
 - Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
 - Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
 - For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of Whitfield District Primary School's child safe culture, **the school principal** will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

As part of Whitfield District Primary School's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document

- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.

As part of Whitfield District Primary School's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **school councils and school council members** will:

- Ensure that child safety is reviewed each year and is discussed and addressed in activities requiring school council approval.
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes
- When hiring employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe (unless delegated to the principal).

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

- Whitfield District Primary School will appoint a Child Safety Officer (Principal)
- Maintain a section in the staffroom dedicated to Child Safe Standards and Mandatory reporting obligations
- Promote and display 'Protect' information for students.

Roles and responsibilities

The Principal will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 3 years.
- The Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Whitfield District Primary School's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register.

Recruitment

Whitfield District Primary School follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the [Department's website](#).

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy, including in relation to assessing the suitability of prospective volunteers and obtaining checks required under this policy.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the 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 coming forward with any allegations or suspicions 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. This training occurs annually or more often as required

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safety Policy (this document), the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures in the staff room and on the school website. They will also be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by school staff to the Principal and will be managed in accordance with Whitfield District Primary School Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures (www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au) where required.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including school council employees) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Whitfield District Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Whitfield District Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found at www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au

Risk reduction and management

Whitfield District Primary School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the school's risk assessment register. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Whitfield District Primary School monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in the school's risk assessment register.

Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

Whitfield District Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and

encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse in the main building corridor or from the office.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at Whitfield District Primary School to read at the school Office or www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed in the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety
- age-appropriate discussion of child safety with students, students making and displaying their own child safety posters, child safety policies and procedures are written in child-friendly language,
- the Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.
- e-smart education programs
- Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships classes
- Buddy system throughout the school – utilising Better Buddies resources

Communications

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au
- Once per term reminders in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular item at staff meetings for discussion
- Volunteer induction processes
- Posters throughout the school

Confidentiality and privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct (www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au)
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures (www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au)
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years. The review will include input from students in RRRR, as well parents/carers and the school community through school council.

Approval

School Principal: Mark Van Bergen

Date of last review: 18th February, 2020 by School Council.



<p>Purpose</p>	<p>“The child safe environments policy: sets out the school’s approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school’s approach to the Child Safe Standards.”</p>
<p>Scope</p>	<p>This policy applies to: “All staff, volunteers, contractors, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.”</p> <p>This policy applies: during school hours, camps, excursions, Outside School Hours Care & Vacation Care, as well online and outside of school hours.</p>
<p>Statement of Commitment & Principles</p>	<p>COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY</p> <p>Whitfield District Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our duty of care and decision-making.</p> <p>Whitfield District Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse. See Whitfield District Primary Schools’ statement commitment to Child Safety policy.</p>
<p>Policy and procedures</p>	<p>Introduce the policy and procedures that will be outlined. For example, “Policies and procedures outlining school’s approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below.”</p> <p>For more information Mr. Mark Van Bergen, Principal Whitfield District Primary School (03) 5729 8286</p>
<p>A child-safe culture</p>	<p>“The school’s culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.”</p> <p>The school’s plan for creating a child safe culture can be found on the website at http://www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au/ and in the policy folder located in the main office and on the schools internal server; U:\School Documents\Policies\Child Safe Whitfield</p>
<p>Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/ Code of conduct</p>	<p>All school staff will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school’s Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The school’s Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.</p>

<p>Human resources Practices and training</p>	<p>Whitfield District Primary School applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.”</p> <p>Further information can be found in the policy folder located in the main office.</p>
<p>Reporting a child safety concern or complaint</p>	<p>The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.”</p> <p>Further information can be found in the policy folder located in the main office.</p>
<p>Risk reduction and management</p>	<p>Whitfield District Primary School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.</p> <p>Further information can be found in the policy folder located in the main office.</p>
<p>Listening to children</p>	<p>Whitfield District Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/ care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.”</p> <p>“When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant’s account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parent/carer) informed about progress.”</p>
<p>Confidentiality and Privacy</p>	<p>This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in DET’s Privacy Policy.</p>
<p>Policy evaluation and review</p>	<p>To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school</p>

	<p>accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents and the school community.”</p>
<p>Definitions</p>	<p>Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:</p> <p>Child abuse includes—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a sexual offence or ○ an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming) • the infliction, on a child, of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ physical violence or ○ serious emotional or psychological harm ○ serious neglect of a child. <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). <p>School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority; a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary);
<p>Related policies and documents</p>	<p>School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care</p> <p>School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations</p> <p>DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework</p>

Child Safe Standard 1.

Key activities of a school Child Safety Officer/leader role.



Whitfield District Primary School

Responsible Person Overseeing Child Safe Policy and Procedures

The principal is ultimately responsible for overseeing the Child Safe Policy and Procedures. Whitfield District Primary School takes child safety seriously and as a consequence all staff will be the persons responsible for ensuring the 7 standards are met, delivered, actioned and reviewed each year. This means our **staff** will take on the role of: **Child Safety Officers**. They will work together to ensure our school staff and community understand their obligations to 'Child Safety'.

Broad areas of the role are to:

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

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3: CODE OF CONDUCT



Child Safety Code of Conduct February 2020

Whitfield District Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal of Whitfield District Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal of Whitfield District Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the [school's child safe policy](#)
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, 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 students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability

- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's Principal.
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

This Code of Conduct was approved by the Whitfield District Primary School Council on 18th February, 2020



CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS (INCLUDING MANDATORY REPORTING) POLICY AND PROCEDURES

WHITFIELD DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply to Whitfield District Primary School.

The specific procedures that are applicable at our school are contained at Appendix A.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council-run events, activities and Outside School Hours Care.

POLICY

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests.

Whitfield District Primary School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation)
- Family violence
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect (including medical neglect)
- Grooming

The staff at Whitfield District Primary School are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

At Whitfield District Primary School we also recognise the diversity of the children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

Mandatory Reporting

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse, and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Whitfield District Primary School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#).

Child in need of protection

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS Child Protection, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

At Whitfield District Primary School we also encourage all staff to make a referral to Child FIRST when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the *School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations*.

Reportable Conduct

Our school must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child; or
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our principal must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health staff and school council employees.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they should notify the Regional Director.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#).

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

"Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes:

- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Failure to disclose offence](#).

Failure to protect offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Failure to protect offence](#).

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic). This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in 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.

For more information about this offence and reporting obligations see: [Child Exploitation and Grooming](#).

RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
Child Safety Policy
Child Safe Code of Conduct
Child Safe Human Resources Practices Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 8th February, 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2023.



APPENDIX A

CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES AT WHITFIELD DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL

For students

- All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a student does not know who to approach at Whitfield District Primary School they should start with their classroom teacher and/or Principal.

Managing disclosures made by students

When managing a disclosure you should:

- listen to the student and allow them to speak
- stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you").

When managing a disclosure you should AVOID:

- displaying expressions of panic or shock
- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
- going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault

- making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

General procedures

Our school will follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (Four Critical Actions) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

All staff at our school who believe that a child is in need of protection, even if it doesn't meet the threshold required for mandatory reporting or the staff member is not a mandatory reporter, should in the first instance, speak to the Principal or should make the required reports to DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police as necessary.

At our school the Principal will be responsible for monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a staff member or any other person from reporting to the relevant authorities if they form a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of abuse.

Reporting suspicions, disclosures or incidents of child abuse

Responsibilities of all school staff

If a school staff member reasonably suspects or witnesses an incident of child abuse or receives a disclosure of child abuse, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid and call 000.
- Speak to the Principal as soon as possible, who will follow the [Four Critical Actions](#).
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in a locked office filing cabinet.
- If the staff member is a mandatory reporter and reasonably believes that a student has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse from which the child's parents have not protected the child, they must ensure that a report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police has been made by the Principal. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the mandatory reporter must make the report.
- If the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child, they must ensure that a report to Victoria Police has been made by the Principal. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the staff member must make the report.

The Principal is responsible for promptly managing the school's response to an incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the incident, suspicion or disclosure is taken seriously. The Principal is also responsible for responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

If the Principal receives a report from a school staff member or member of the school community of a suspicion, disclosure or incident of child abuse, they must:

- Follow the [Four Critical Actions](#) as soon as possible, including:
 - Responding to an emergency
 - Reporting to authorities/referring to services
 - Contacting parents/carers and
 - Providing ongoing support.
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure, including actions taken [consider using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#)] and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in a locked office filing cabinet. They are also responsible for ensuring that any staff member who reported the incident, disclosure or suspicion to them also makes and keeps notes of the incident.
- At Whitfield District Primary School, the Principal will be responsible for ensuring that there is a prompt response to the disclosure and that the child is appropriately supported.

If the principal/other nominated staff member responsible above is unavailable, the classroom teacher will take on the role and responsibilities described in this section.

Duty of care and ongoing support for students

Fulfilling the requirements in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of abuse.

All staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students. All staff must ensure that the Principal is aware of any incidents, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible after they occur. This will allow appropriate supports to be put in place for the student affected.

For school visitors, volunteers and school community members

All community members aged 18 years or over should be aware of their legal obligations – see *Failure to disclose offence* above, in this Policy.

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details see the Four Critical Actions - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActionsChildAbuse.pdf>

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

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.

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.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

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.

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.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing 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 wellbeing 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/familyviolence/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) 9267 0228**
 Ballarat **(03) 5337 7135**
 Sale **(03) 5622 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**.



PROTECT

Everyone has the right to be safe and be protected from abuse.

No one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid, including anyone in your family, anyone at school or anywhere else in the community.

Tell a teacher or any adult at your school if you feel unsafe.



It's everyone's responsibility.

Adults at school must listen and respond to concerns about child abuse.

If you suspect abuse of any child or young person, you have a responsibility to report it, even if you are not sure.

Further information & resources
www.education.vic.gov.au/protect

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7: STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHILD EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION at Whitfield District Primary School



Child Safe Standard 7 (Standard 7) requires schools to develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- Resilience; and
- Child abuse awareness and prevention.

Ministerial Order 870 also requires schools to promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING WHITFIELD DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Every government school must have a Student Engagement Policy which provides the basis on which they can develop and maintain safe, supportive and inclusive school environments.

As part of this, Student Engagement Policies should also articulate the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour.

Whitfield District Primary School's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy is available on the school website www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au and was updated in Feb 2020.

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) – Fortnightly.

The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships learning materials have been designed for teachers in primary and secondary schools to develop students' social, emotional and positive relationship skills. Efforts to promote social and emotional skills and positive gender norms in children and young people has been shown to improve health related outcomes and subjective wellbeing. It also reduces antisocial behaviours including engagement in gender-related violence.

The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) learning materials cover eight topics of Social and Emotional Learning across all levels of primary and secondary education: Emotional Literacy; Personal strengths; Positive Coping; Problem Solving; Stress Management; Help Seeking; Gender and Identity; and Positive Gender Relationships.

HEALTHY AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS (INCLUDING SEXUALITY)

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

- The school utilises the expertise of the King Valley Cluster staff and external agencies (such as Gateway health, as well as Life Education) to deliver Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality).

The school is currently undertaking the

BUDDIES SYSTEM – utilising Better Buddies Resources.

The school has a school wide Buddy system in place. Students engage in daily activities with their buddy such as afternoon jobs, as well as weekly activities such as gardening and online footy tips.

eSmart

Whitfield District Primary school is an eSmart school. The school annually teaches and reviews curriculum and policy documents in line with eSmart school guidelines.

School Newsletter.

The school newsletter is predominately written by students and is a valuable tool in communicating the learning and engaging parent participation in the school's learning programs. The newsletter is available online at the school website and is displayed at school and in the community. It is a useful tool for **promoting child empowerment and participation.**

Other resources that can be accessed

SAFE SCHOOLS HUB FOR STUDENTS

Students have their own Safe Schools site, with carefully selected, age-appropriate online resources to engage them in the challenge of creating safe places to learn and grow.

<http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home>

This document was updated 9th February, 2020 by Mark van Bergen (Principal)

STATEMENT OF VALUES AND SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY OF WHITFIELD DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the values of our school community and explain the vision, mission and objectives of our school.

POLICY

Whitfield District Primary School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students, staff and members of our community. Our school recognises the importance of the partnership between our school and parents and carers to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, creating an inclusive and safe school environment for our students.

The programs and teaching at Whitfield District Primary School support and promote the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

This policy outlines our school's vision, mission, objective, values and expectations of our school community. This policy is available on our school website www.whitfieldps.vic.edu.au , and our Parent Handbook.

To celebrate and embed our Statement of Values and Philosophy in our school community, we

- display posters and banners that promote your values in our school
- celebrate our values in our school newsletter
- provide awards and recognition for students who actively demonstrate the values
- discuss our values with students in the classroom, meetings and assemblies.

VISION

Exceptional Educational Experiences

MISSION

To provide a caring, stimulating and safe environment which guides students toward their full potential, in a dynamic learning environment, with a particular emphasis placed on the importance of English and Mathematics.

OBJECTIVE

Whitfield District Primary School's objective is to ensure all students leave our school with a broad and comprehensive curriculum knowledge, as well as the personal and social skills required to succeed at secondary school and in community life.

VALUES

The values which form the basis of the actions of the Whitfield School community are:

Respect

- Recognising and accepting the differences in ability, race, age, religion and beliefs of others.
- For our environment.

Learning

- Developing and acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes focusing on our personal best at all times.

Goal setting

- Awareness and development of personal goals, both academically and socially.

Teamwork

- Learning together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

Honesty

- Truthfulness and open communication in everything we do.

Communication

- Developing and practicing good communication and social skills.

BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

Whitfield District Primary School acknowledges that the behaviour of staff, parents, carers and students has an impact on our school community and culture. We acknowledge a shared responsibility to create a positive learning environment for the children and young people at our school.

As principals and school leaders, we will:

- model positive behaviour and effective leadership
- valuing and accepting the right of all people to live in a free, just and peaceful society
- embedding Human Rights Education and Values Education across all aspects of school life including the formal curriculum, learning programs and extra curricula activities
- modelling appropriate behaviour by treating everyone with respect and valuing the contributions of all school community members
- promoting and embedding a human rights culture within the school community
- evaluating the school's progress as they work to establish an inclusive, positive and tolerant school environment.
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community

- work collaboratively to create a school environment where respectful and safe behaviour is expected of everyone
- behave in a manner consistent with the standards of our profession and meet core responsibilities to provide safe and inclusive environments
- plan, implement and review our work to ensure the care, safety, security and general wellbeing of all students at school
- identify and support students who are or may be at risk
- do our best to ensure every child achieves their personal and learning potential
- work with parents to understand their child's needs and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly
- respond appropriately when safe and inclusive behaviour is not demonstrated and implement appropriate interventions and sanctions when required
- inform parents of the school's communication and complaints procedures
- ask any person who is acting in an offensive, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate way to leave the school grounds.

As teachers and non-teaching school staff, we will:

- model positive behaviour to students consistent with the standards of our profession
- valuing and accepting the right of all people to live in a free, just and peaceful society
- embedding Human Rights Education and Values Education across all aspects of school life including the formal curriculum, learning programs and extra curricula activities
- modelling appropriate behaviour by treating everyone with respect and valuing the contributions of all school community members
- promoting and embedding a human rights culture within the school community
- evaluating the school's progress as they work to establish an inclusive, positive and tolerant school environment.
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community
- proactively engage with parents about student outcomes
- work with parents to understand the needs of each student and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly
- work collaboratively with parents to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students with additional needs
- communicate with the principal and school leaders in the event we anticipate or face any tension or challenging behaviours from parents
- treat all members of the school community with respect.

As parents and carers, we will:

- model positive behaviour to our child
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community
- ensure our child attends school on time, every day the school is open for instruction
- take an active interest in our child's school and learning
- work with the school to achieve the best outcomes for our child
- communicate constructively with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns
- support school staff to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment for all students
- Positively promote and supervise the use of digital technologies out of school hours
- follow the school's processes for communication with staff and making complaints
- treat all school leaders, staff, students, and other members of the school community with respect.

As students, we will:

- model positive behaviour to other students
- communicate politely and respectfully with all members of the school community.
- comply with and model school values
- behave in a safe and responsible manner
- respect ourselves, other members of the school community and the school environment.
- actively participate in school
- not disrupt the learning of others and make the most of our educational opportunities.

As community members, we will:

- model positive behaviour to the school community
- treat members of the school community with respect, including self
- support school staff to maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students
- value and accept the right of all people to live in a free, just and peaceful society
- Take responsibility for self and contribute to a culture of community.
- utilise the school's processes for communication with staff and submitting complaints.

UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOURS

Schools are not public places, and the Principal has the right to permit or deny entry to school grounds (for more information, see our Visitors Policy).

Unreasonable behaviour that is demonstrated by school staff, parents, carers, students or members of our school community will not be tolerated at school, or during school activities.

Unreasonable behaviour includes:

- speaking or behaving in a rude, manipulative, aggressive or threatening way, either in person, via electronic communication or social media, or over the telephone
- the use or threat of violence of any kind, including physically intimidating behaviour such as aggressive hand gestures or invading another person's personal space
- sending demanding, rude, confronting or threatening letters, emails or text messages
- sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or derogatory comments
- the use of social media or public forums to make inappropriate or threatening remarks about the school, staff or students.

Harassment, bullying, violence, aggression, threatening behaviour and unlawful discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school.

Unreasonable behaviour and/or failure to uphold the principles of this Statement of Values and School Philosophy may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences by the school Principal.

At the Principal's discretion, unreasonable behaviour may be managed by:

- requesting that the parties attend a mediation or counselling sessions
- implementing specific communication protocols
- written warnings
- conditions of entry to school grounds or school activities
- exclusion from school grounds or attendance at school activities
- reports to Victoria Police
- legal action

Inappropriate student behaviour will be managed in accordance with our school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy.

Our Statement of Values and School Philosophy ensures that everyone in our school community will be treated with fairness and respect. In turn, we will strive to create a school that is inclusive and safe, where everyone is empowered to participate and learn.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Student Wellbeing and Engagement
Bullying Prevention,
Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
Child Safe Policy
Child Safety Code of Conduct

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 18th February, 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2024.

STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY WHITFIELD DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Whitfield District Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

CONTENTS

1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
6. Student behavioural expectations
7. Engaging with families
8. Evaluation

POLICY

1. School profile

'Exceptional Educational Experiences' is the vision at Whitfield District Primary School. It is a small rural school located in the beautiful King Valley and services children and their families from the locations of Cheshunt, Cheshunt South, Rose River, Whitfield and King Valley. Families derive their incomes from farming and skilled or semi-skilled employment in Wangaratta and the local community.

The school enjoys overwhelming support from these families. They support classroom programs, maintain grounds, and actively participate in camps, excursions and our large gardening and cooking programs.

The school has 35 students enrolled in 2020. It is currently staffed by two highly experienced full time teachers. The school prides itself in providing 'exceptional educational experiences' to all students. 'Authentic' and 'integrated' learning activities provide the stimulus, engagement and opportunities to develop a lifelong love of learning. The school has a great music program and private instrumental lessons in 5 disciplines are offered at the school. Italian language, Library and Art are supported by visiting teachers. The school is part of the Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships program, extensive camps program and Social Enterprise program. The school derives value adding from its active participation in The King Valley Cluster of schools. Cluster initiatives include the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden and Cooking program, a shared Italian teacher, a range of sporting activities including Personal Best athletic sports, cultural days and professional learning initiatives. The school was established in 1875 and many of the families have historic links with the school. The school is the focal point of much community activity.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Vision

Exceptional Educational Experiences

Purpose

To provide a caring, stimulating and safe environment which guides students toward their full potential, in a dynamic learning environment, with a particular emphasis placed on the importance of English and Mathematics.

Values

The values which form the basis of the actions of the Whitfield School community are:

Respect

- Recognising and accepting the differences in ability, race, age, religion and beliefs of others.
- For our environment.

Learning

- Developing and acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes focusing on our personal best at all times.

Goal setting

- Awareness and development of personal goals, both academically and socially.

Teamwork

- Learning together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

Honesty

- Truthfulness and open communication in everything we do.

Communication

- Developing and practicing good communication and social skills.

3. Engagement strategies

Whitfield District Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum to ensure that students are able to develop their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers at Whitfield District Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions and encouraged to speak with their teachers and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through a buddy program, school plays, athletics, music programs and class activities such as gardening and cup-day.
- All students are welcome to self-refer to the Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
 - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships

- Better Buddies
- eSmart
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion through sports teams, buddy program, leadership camps and daily morning games.

Targeted

- each classroom has a teacher responsible to monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their class, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Supports and develop an Individual Education Plan
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- the Principal will respond to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year and access SSSO support and advice as required
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma and access SSSO support and advice as required

Individual

- Student Support Groups, see:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroup.s.aspx>
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Support Services
- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Lookout - Lookout centres are an additional resource to support schools, child protection practitioners and case workers to meet their obligations under the out-of-home care education commitment and to improve educational outcomes for children and young people living in out of home care

Whitfield District Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Whitfield District Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Staff team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Whitfield District primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of the Whitfield District Primary School community have a right to experience a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity at all times. We value and promote the rights and responsibilities of students, staff and parents.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.
- value and accept the right of all people to live in a free, just and peaceful society
- treat everyone with respect, including self.
- Take responsibility for self and contribute to a culture of community.

Students can expect and are expected to contribute to

- participate fully in their educational program
- respect the right of others to learn.
- safe behaviour and an inclusive school
- attend regularly and participate
- manage their own behaviour
- display positive behaviours that show respect to themselves, the community and the rights of others
- their own safety, with the support of the whole school community, to protect them from bullying behaviours, cyber bullying and any unsafe practices.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school staff.

6. Student behavioural expectations

Relationship based, whole school and classroom practices are the best way to support positive behaviours. Some students require additional support to develop pro-social, positive behaviours. A staged response, with reinforcement is sometimes required. This is best supported with calm, consistent and predictable school classrooms and environments that recognise all children's individual needs and provide appropriate support.

At Whitfield District Primary School children are supported by caring and astute staff. Classroom behaviour, playground activities, school data and parent communication are all valuable insights into social and learning behaviours. Staff seek appropriate professional advice and when required will implement a staged response. Some interventions and prevention strategies are applied as needed; such as Individual Learning Plans, eSmart curriculum, student designed classroom norms.

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Whitfield District Primary School's Bullying Prevention policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Whitfield District primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Principal

- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will NOT be used in any circumstance.

7. Engaging with families

Whitfield District Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

Parents and carers can promote positive educational outcomes by

- taking an active interest in their child's educational progress
- cooperating and communicating regularly with the school
- actively supporting their child's engagement in the school environment
- supporting the school in maintaining a safe, respectful learning environment.
- Positively promote and supervise the use of digital technologies out of school hours

8. Evaluation

Whitfield District Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management

- CASES21
- SOCS

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Statement of Values and School Philosophy,

Bullying Prevention,

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child Safe Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 18th February, 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2022.

VISITORS POLICY

WHITFIELD DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL



PURPOSE

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to Whitfield District Primary School.

SCOPE

This policy applies to any visitors who may attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction between the hours of 8:45am – 3:45pm. Outside of these times, our front office is not staffed and the only visitors who are permitted on school grounds are parents/carers or their delegates who are dropping off or picking up students from Outside School Hours Care, school events such as parent teacher interviews, concerts, sport or other school activities.

DEFINITIONS

Child-related work: As defined by the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic), child-related work is work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional contact with children that is incidental to the work.

POLICY

Whitfield District Primary School strives to create an open and inclusive school community, and encourages parents and carers to be actively involved in their child's development and education. We also strive to foster strong partnerships with local community services, schools and other organisations.

Whitfield District Primary School is not a public place. The principal has the authority to permit or deny entry to school grounds, and encourages all visitors to familiarise themselves with our school's Child Safe Policy, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Student wellbeing and engagement policy.

From time to time, different members of the public may visit our school. Visitors may include, but are not limited to:

- Volunteers – see our school's Volunteers Policy for more information
- Prospective parents, students and employees
- Invited speakers, sessional instructors and others addressing learning and development
- Public officials (eg Members of Parliament, local councillors)
- Persons conducting business eg: uniform suppliers, booksellers, official school photographers, commercial salespeople
- Tradespeople
- Children's services agencies
- Department of Health and Human Services workers
- Victoria Police

- Persons authorised to enter school premises (eg Worksafe inspectors, health officers etc)
- Other Department of Education and Training staff (including allied health staff) or contractors
- NDIS therapists or other allied health or health practitioners

Sign in procedure

All visitors to Whitfield District Primary School are required to report to the school office on arrival (see exceptions below in relation to parents/carers). Visitors must:

- Record their name, signature, date and time of visit and purpose of visit in the visitors Sign in/out book.
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request
- Produce their valid Working with Children Check where required by this policy (see below)
- Wear a visitor's [lanyard/name tag] if directed to by staff at the school.
- Follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including Child Safety Code of Conduct, Sexual Harassment Policy, Workplace Bullying Policy, Respect for School Staff, Student wellbeing and engagement policy.
- Return to the office upon departure, sign out and return visitor's lanyard.

Whitfield District Primary School will ensure that our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct/Child Safety Statement of Commitment are available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Requirements for visitors to produce a valid Working with Children Check card

For Working with Children Check (WWC Check) and other suitability check requirements relating to parents/carers and other volunteers working with students please see our Volunteers Policy.

All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** (see definition above) must have a valid WWC Check.

In some circumstances, visitors to Whitfield District Primary School who are **not** engaged in child-related work will also be required to produce a valid WWC Check depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. For example, Whitfield District Primary School will require a valid WWC Check for:

- **visitors who will be working regularly with children** during the time they are visiting, even though direct contact with children is not a central part of their normal duties
- **visitors (e.g. contractors)**, who will regularly be performing work at the school and in circumstances where they will be performing their work in an area where they will be unsupervised and around children.

Further background checks, including references, may also be requested at the discretion of the principal.

Visitors who will be working in areas away from students (e.g. a visiting auditor who will be located in the front office with administration staff) or who will be supervised and accompanied by a staff member during their visit (e.g. a Member of Parliament, a journalist, a prospective parent on a school tour) will not be required to have a WWC Check.

Sworn Victoria Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWC Check, but may be asked to verify that they are sworn officers by providing proof of identification.

Invited speakers and presenters

On occasion, Whitfield District Primary School may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops and special programs for our students. Consistent with Department of Education and Training requirements, Whitfield District Primary School will:

- ensure that the content of presentations and programs by external providers contributes to the educational development of our students and is consistent with curriculum objectives
- ensure that any proposed visit, programs or content delivered by visitors complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular and is consistent with the values of public education, Department policies and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic). In particular, programs delivered by visitors are to be delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to:
 - elected government
 - the rule of law
 - equal rights for all before the law
 - freedom of religion, speech and association
 - the values of openness and tolerance
 - respect the range of views held by students and their families.

Other visitors

All business operators, tradespeople and other visitors attending the school to conduct work must report to the school office upon arrival for instruction and follow the sign in procedure outlined above.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Student Welfare & Engagement Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child Safe Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on 18th February, 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2024

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

WHITFIELD DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL



PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Whitfield District Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

DEFINITIONS

Child-related work: work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Closely related family member: parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

Volunteer worker: A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

School work: School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

POLICY

Whitfield District Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Whitfield District Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Whitfield District Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to complete volunteer forms for cooking and swimming programs. Volunteers can also approach a classroom teacher or principal for other events, classes, excursions and camps.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

Whitfield District Primary School values the many volunteers that assist for cooking and swimming programs, events, classes, excursions and camps.

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)* and the Child Safe Standards, Whitfield District Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Whitfield District Primary School's is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the Principal, classroom teacher or business manager for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with camps and similar overnight events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our school may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

Non child-related work

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example volunteering after hours for gardening, maintenance, working bees, school council, other fundraising groups, during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have Working with Children or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Example School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

The principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at Whitfield District Primary School.

Whitfield District Primary School will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The principal (or their nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Whitfield District Primary School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the

circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

Public liability insurance

The Department of Education and Training's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in school work is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Student Welfare & Engagement Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child Safe Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council on 18th February, 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2024.