



STRATHAIRD PRIMARY SCHOOL Child Safety Policy 2016

This policy will be made available on the school web-site

Purpose:

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.

Scope:

The policy will apply to all staff, volunteers, contractors and whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

Statement of Commitment:

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

Strathaird Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Strathaird Primary School is 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. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Strathaird Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays 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.

Principals for child safety:

In its planning, decision-making and operations *Strathaird 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 guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children;
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 issues;
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 and Procedures:

Policies and procedures outlining school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below. Further information may be sourced by contacting the Assistant Principal Welfare Officer.

A Child-Safe Culture

The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

School leaders and managers 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.

Further information may be found. For example, "The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour."

A Child Safety Code of Conduct :

To promote child safety in the school environment we acknowledge the following:

All students have a right to:

- Take part in learning programs that meet their individual needs.
- Feel secure and to be safe in a caring and supportive environment.
- Work and play without interference in an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation.
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness.
- Have learning continue without disruption in a supportive environment.
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity.
- Expect the school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.

All students have a responsibility to:

- Care and value themselves, others, teachers and the school community.
- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others.
- Treat others with respect and good manners.
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour, modelling and supporting school rules.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.
- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others.
- Explore their full potential in their learning.

School staff adheres to the following standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children:

- School staff provide opportunities for all students to learn
- School staff treat their students with courtesy and dignity
- School staff work within the limits of their professional expertise

- School staff maintain objectivity in their relationships with students
- School staff are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not.

Human Resources:

The 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 are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and volunteers maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint:

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.

The school can be contacted for reporting a child safety concern or complaint.

Implementation:

**Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse
Forming a belief on reasonable grounds**

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

Reporting a belief

Mandated staff members (*Teachers and Principals*) must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection.

Staff members, **whether or not mandated**, need to report to the principal or assistant principal their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report.

Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures Policy 2014 for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse.

These procedures do not:

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or

- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Risk Reduction and Management:

The 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.

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

- Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies:
 - *Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures Policy 2014*
 - *Student Engagement Policy 2014*
 - *Duty of Care Policy 2014*
 - **References:**
 - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>
- If the school identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.
- As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
- At least annually, the school must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school staff about:
 - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
 - child abuse risks in the school environment; and
 - the school's current child safety standards.

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

- The school authority must 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.
- The school must promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Listening To Children:

The 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.

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 parents/carers) informed about progress.

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 School Privacy Policy.

Definitions

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

Child abuse includes—

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence or
 - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
 - serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

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

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

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

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

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

Related DET policies and documents

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)

[DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework](#)

[School Privacy Policy](#)

This policy was passed at School Council on: 6th September, 2016