

Yarrunga Primary School

CHILD SAFE POLICY

June, 2019



RATIONALE:

Yarrunga Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students, within all school environments, inside all school environments, inside and outside school hours. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.

Yarrunga Primary School has a zero tolerance to child abuse.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

Yarrunga 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 students and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Yarrunga Primary School has the 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.

BACKGROUND:

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards became effective from 1 January 2016. For most organisations working with children, with the aim of promoting cultural change in the way organisations manage the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The child safe standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government organisations. This report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

The child safe standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations that provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

For definitions of key terms within the Child Safe Standards, see Appendix 1.

THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS:

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements (See Appendix 2)

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety (See Rationale)

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children (see Appendix 3)

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel (see Child Safe Recruitment Practices Policy)

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (See Mandatory Reporting policy, Child Safe Incident Reporting Template and Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template for Victorian Schools)

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse (Appendix 4)

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children (see Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy)

AIMS:

Yarrunga Primary School will implement the Child Safe Standards to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school and promote an organisational culture that manages the risk of child abuse and neglect.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Our school has developed policies and procedures that aim to keep children safe. The standards will provide a framework to identify gaps and improve policy and practices around child safety.
- At Yarrunga Primary School we believe that our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct enable for the monitoring of risk and risk management.
- In its planning, decision making and operations Yarrunga Primary School will:
 - Take preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
 - Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
 - Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
 - Respect diversity in culture and child rearing while keeping child safety paramount;
 - Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
 - Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
 - 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;
 - Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
 - Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
 - Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
 - Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
 - Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - The person's history of work involving children; and
 - References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year review cycle, or every 24 months, whichever should occur first.

REVIEW: 2020

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL:

APPENDIX 1:

Yarrunga Primary School School Child Safe Definitions:

Definitions

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

Child abuse includes—

- any act committed against a child involving—
 - a sexual offence or
 - sexual exploitation (including pornography and prostitution)
 - 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
 - human trafficking (including forced marriage)
- serious neglect of a child (physical and medical)¹.

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

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

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

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

School staff means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
 - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, 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).
 - a minister of religion.
- **School governing authority** means:
 - The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or

- The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
- The Principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

APPENDIX 2:

Yarrunga Primary School

Child Safety – Roles and Responsibilities

June, 2019:

Role	Responsibilities
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leading the development of a culture of child safety• Acting in accordance with our Code of Conduct• Appointment of a Child Safety Officer• Ensuring all staff are appropriately recruited, inducted and regularly made aware of their responsibilities for ensuring the safety of students• Review the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy as legislative requirements change and/or periodically.• Emphasise child safe practices during the employment selection process• Collect and securely store hard copy documents relating to child safety (i.e. <i>Responding the Suspected Child Abuse: Template for Victorian Schools</i> and <i>Child Safe Reporting Template</i>).
Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acting in accordance with our Code of Conduct• Communicating online cyber safety information to staff, students and parents
Business Manager/Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring all contractors are compliant and are appropriately inducted into the school.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acting in accordance with our Code of Conduct• Reporting suspicions of abuse and/or neglect to appropriate authorities• Determining and minimising risks posed by unfamiliar people and places when planning excursions and camps

APPENDIX 3:

Yarrunga Primary School

Child Safety - Code of Conduct

June 2019:

Yarrunga 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 and school leaders of Yarrunga 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 and school leaders of Yarrunga 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 leadership
- 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 endorsed/approved by the Yarrunga Primary School council on



for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than June, 2021.