

This policy detailing procedures measure and practices was developed in accordance with Ministerial Order 870- Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools

Child Safe Commitment

Our school is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. Our School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

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

Our School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, to providing a safe environment for children with a disability, and vulnerable children.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Westall Primary School is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all its students from all backgrounds, cultures, languages, LGBTI, religious and other minority groups.

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

Purpose

Westall 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

Westall 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 values. At Westall Primary School, our vision is to create ‘*A curious, inspired and empowered community.*’ We know children can struggle to achieve their personal best if they are not safe from abuse.

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

- Kindness
- Excellence
- Creativity
- Fairness

Westall 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, LGBTI, out of home care, international students and children who are vulnerable.

Every person involved in Westall 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, Westall 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

Westall 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 (Following), 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 and in hard copy [from the front 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 Westall Primary School 'child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the principal and assistant principal[s]) 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 Westall Primary School 'child safe culture', and the **schools mandatory reporting obligations, 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 Westall Primary School '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 a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- 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).
- Include child safe material in student and staff induction process
- Discuss child safety at assemblies

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

Roles and responsibilities

School leaders 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 team is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 2 years.
- The principal team responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the principal team if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The principal team is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in 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

The 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. The school requires all regular volunteers to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

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 via an induction handbook with hyperlinks to relevant documents. 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 or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with the schools Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures where required.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers (including homestay providers) 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.

The 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, the 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 on the schools website

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, found in the school's risk assessment register and emergency management plan. 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.

The 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 and emergency management plan.

Listening to, communicating with and empowering 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. 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 at on the schools website.

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 on the schools website
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across 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,
- assemblies
- student induction materials
- health classes

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.
- Student health days
- RUOK day
- Boys and Girls health sessions
- Respectful relationship curriculum links across teaching areas
- E-smart and cyber-safety awareness programs
- Anti-bullying programs

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
- Once per term reminders in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion

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 (Following)
 - Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures available on the school website
 - 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.](#)
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Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 2 years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community as part of the Schools Self Evaluation

Approval

School Principal Peter Leag

Date of last review: 3 May 2021

This code of conduct detailing procedures measure and practices was developed in accordance with Ministerial Order 870- Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools

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.

1. RATIONALE

Westall Primary School strives to provide a safe, secure and stable environment in which students can learn and develop individual skills and abilities. All staff/adult volunteers/contractors are required to follow Child Safe Guidelines to ensure all students are safe from all forms of abuse.

2. AIMS

Our Code of Conduct aims to:

- Provide clear procedures which guide the behaviour of adult School community members.
- Promote a structure and programmes which emphasise a zero tolerance, positive preventative approach to child safety
- Provide an environment that promotes a sense of security and confidence within members of the School community.

3. PRINCIPLES

The adult/child relationship should be professional at all times

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

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- All staff/adult volunteers and ancillary staff must sign and agree to the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- All staff/adult volunteers and ancillary staff must report non-compliance of the code in writing to a principal class member at the earliest opportunity
- Reporting to a principal class member, does not absolve individual staff members responsibility to mandatory report (or other legal obligations)
- A Principal class member must follow up on all allegations in compliance with any DET/Legal requirements

5. ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

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

- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically

- diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
 - If special needs students need assistance with toileting two staff members should be present
 - If transporting children in a car, at least 2 children, or 2 adults should be in the car wherever possible
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school’s leadership using the school proforma for this purpose
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school’s leadership using the school proforma for this purpose
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

6. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

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

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children, giving some students more unwarranted attention than others, developing a relationship beyond the professional role you are undertaking)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking student/s in a secluded space)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact which children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express discriminatory personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school’s leadership and/or consent or the school governing authority’s approval
 - for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching, social activity not logged and approved with the school.
 - accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
 - contact with pre-existing friends/family is permitted
- have any private online contact with a child (including by phone, social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family unless
 - necessary for educational purposes congruent with your role or for duty of care purposes (avoid discussions not congruent with your role, or that might constitute ‘grooming’ behaviour)
 - the platform is open enough to allow for observation of other staff/students/platform provider/ school
 - the platform does not provide access to students personal details and personal communications
 - where-ever possible use a platform endorsed by the school or DET, or set up exclusively for educational purposes.
- photograph or video a child:
 - without the consent of the parent or guardians or if a child objects to being photographed
 - without an official, educational purpose or for duty of care purposes
 - in a manner that would cause concern (i.e. focussing too heavily on particular students, archiving large amounts of student photos on a personal device without a valid reason, inappropriate posing etc)
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

Signed awareness of the policies [online link](#) - or print and sign if no internet

Staff/Volunteer Name.....

Staff Signature.....Date.....