



CLYDE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD SAFE POLICY

RATIONALE:

As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report (2013-14), there is a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety in schools, underpinned by child safe standards which were introduced into law in 2015. The Child Safe Standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect and promote cultural changes so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice. The seven standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools commencing on January 1 2016.

AIMS:

1. To focus the school's care and decision making on the **safety and wellbeing** of all children enrolled at the school.
2. To promote and maintain a **child safe organisation**, inclusive of all school environments, through implementing the seven **child safe standards** (see below).
3. To demonstrate a **zero tolerance** for child abuse which includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious or psychological harm and serious neglect of a child.
4. To demonstrate a strong commitment to **cultural safety** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a **disability**.
5. To actively and respectfully **listen to and empower all children** in regards to their safety and wellbeing.

DEPARTMENT POLICY:

Ministerial Order No. 870 (available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe) sets out specific actions that registered schools need to take to manage the risk of child abuse in schools.

All Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

1. **the principles** that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
2. **the actions** the school proposes to take to:
 - demonstrate its commitment to child safety; monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy;
 - support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
 - support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
 - ensure that child safety is considered in the recruitment, selection and management of staff (including contractors and volunteers).

CRIMINAL OFFENCES:

Failure to Disclose Offence (s.327) Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 years of age must disclose the information to the police. Failure to disclose the information to the police is a criminal offence and applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. The obligation is to disclose the information to the police as soon as it is practicable to do so, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

Failure to Protect (s.49C (2)) Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer, sport coach or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under 16 years of age, who is in the care or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child in the organisation from the risk of sexual abuse from an adult associated with the

organisation, is a criminal offence. In a school context this will include the Headmaster and the Business Manager and may extend to School Counsellors, Heads of Department and Heads of School.

Grooming Offence (s.49B (2)) The offence of grooming prohibits predatory conduct designed to ‘prepare’ or ‘groom’ a child for future sexual activity. The offence applies to communication with children under 16 years of age. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT:

Clyde Primary 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 Department of Health and Human Services’ 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 immediate action to respond to a complaint.

Legislation states that all Clyde PS staff have the legal obligation to report suspected cases of child abuse. Failure to report or protect is a criminal offence.

IMPLEMENTATION:

<p>Introduction Principle of inclusion</p>	<p>Clyde’s child safety standards take into account the diversity of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and vulnerable children. Refer to Equal Opportunity and Wellbeing and Engagement policies and the risk assessment.</p>
<p>Standard 1 Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Principal will nominate a Child Safety Officer and outline the duties involved in the person’s job description. 2. The Child Safety Officer’s duties will include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. developing and enhancing Clyde Primary School’s child safety strategies b. monitoring and reassessing the effectiveness of the child safety strategies, together with the Wellbeing Team c. communicating the school’s child safety strategies to the school community through staff meetings, newsletters, induction etc d. training staff (including contractors and volunteers) in the school’s child safety strategies including identifying, assessing and minimising risks of child abuse e. leading or delivering programs for children about the school’s child safety strategies and their right to be safe and protected f. developing policies, procedures and supporting documentation including communication and resources g. acting as the person to whom mandatory reporting of child abuse is reported. 3. The Principal will nominate a Wellbeing Team to support and assist students who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse. 4. The Principal will inform all members of the school community of the school’s Child Safety policy. 5. The Principal will make the Child Safety Officer’s contact details available to staff, parents and students via the school website. 6. The Principal will oversee the staff and volunteer recruitment practices. 7. The school’s commitment to child safety will be reflected in the vision statement and Strategic Plan. 8. Child Safety matters will be included on leadership, staff and Wellbeing Team meeting agendas. 9. The Child Safe policy will be approved by School Council.

10. The Annual Report will report on child safety at Clyde Primary School.

<p>Standard 2 A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety</p>	<p>Clyde Primary School’s Child Safe policy is an overarching document that provides an overview of key elements of the school’s approach and commitment to child safety. Other relevant policies that guide the establishment of a child safe school environment, both physical and online, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Camps and Excursions (including sport and music events) ▪ Care of Ill Students ▪ Code of Conduct ▪ Equal Opportunity ▪ Social Media ▪ Induction ▪ Mandatory Reporting ▪ Mobile phones ▪ Parent/Carer/Student Code of Behaviour ▪ Privacy Policy ▪ Safe and Orderly Environment ▪ Safe Use of ICT ▪ Student Wellbeing ▪ Supervision ▪ Working with Children
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<p>Standard 3 A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 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. 2. All of Clyde Primary School’s staff and volunteers must agree to abide by the various codes of conduct and comply with the related policies listed above in Standard 2. 3. The Child Safe Code of Conduct clearly sets out the acceptable and unacceptable adult/child relationships and behaviours (do’s and don’ts) (see Appendix 1). 4. Other relevant codes of conduct include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Code of Conduct sets out the behavioural expectations of all members in the school community, including the principal, all school staff, parents, students and visitors. It respects the diversity of individuals in the school community and addresses the shared responsibilities of all members in building a safe, inclusive and respectful school community. b. The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards for school staff and the associated guiding principles such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teachers provide opportunities for all students to learn ○ teachers treat their students with courtesy and dignity ○ teachers maintain objectivity in their relationships with students ○ teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not c. The Working with Children Policy clearly outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviours relating to child safety at Clyde Primary School.
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<p>Standard 4 Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In recruiting new staff and volunteers school leaders will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate Clyde Primary School’s commitment to child safety and an awareness of ethical and legislative obligations
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<p>the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. request two forms of personal identification and evidence of a current Working with Children Check for all people engaged in child-related work c. carry out thorough reference and police checks during the recruitment process of staff and volunteers d. conduct interviews that give insight into an applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries. <p>2. In training and supervising staff and volunteers school leaders will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. train staff (including contractors and volunteers) in the school's child safety strategies including identifying, assessing and minimising risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. b. Support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability. c. Supervise new staff and volunteers to ensure they understand the school's commitment to child safety and the role they play in protecting children from abuse such as reporting through appropriate channels any inappropriate behaviour. d. monitor and reassess the effectiveness of the child safety strategies, together with the Wellbeing Team
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<p>Standard 5 Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Child Safety Officer will familiarise all staff with the Clyde Primary School Mandatory Reporting policy and documenting procedures. 2. The Child Safety Officer will ensure that all staff annually review the Department's Mandatory Reporting online Professional Development module. 3. The Principal will inform all new staff, whether mandated or not, that they need to report to the Principal or Child Safety Officer when a belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties, that a child is in need of protection from physical injury, sexual abuse or other forms of abuse. 4. School leaders will record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using the incident reporting form (see Appendix 2) which will be securely stored. 5. When school staff are gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged mis-conduct with, or abuse of, a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account of events and take them seriously, checking understanding and keeping the child informed about progress. The school will ensure that the child is in a safe and supportive environment until official direction is given that ensures the child's safety. Clyde PS will ensure any recommendations required of the school are adhered to for a student who discloses abuse. 6. Fair procedures for individuals involved in any incidents will be implemented and privacy will be safeguarded. 7. If a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.
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<p>Standard 6 Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Child Safety Officer will involve all staff and selected students in completing a Risk Assessment Checklist (see Appendix 3) annually. 2. The Risk Assessment Checklist will be reviewed in the event of an incident or breach of the Child Safety Standards. 3. The Child Safety Officer will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the risk controls. 4. The Principal will ensure all new staff are informed of their obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse.
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<p>Standard 7 Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers will ensure that children feel safe to report abuse and that processes are in place to ensure that students are empowered to raise any child safety concerns. 2. Teachers will support students to develop appropriate knowledge and skills so they can identify and communicate when they do not feel safe in physical and online environments. Students will be made aware of internal and external support, for example Kids Helpline. 3. Teachers will involve students in decision making, especially about matters that directly affect them. 4. Teachers will seek students' views in relation to safety and respect what they have to say. 5. Teachers will educate students about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, healthy and respectful relationships and rights and responsibilities. 6. The Child Safety Officer will promote the Child Safe policy in a way that is readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children. 7. The Wellbeing Team will ensure the safety of all students is being monitored, particularly children who are vulnerable due to family circumstances, abilities or indigenous, cultural or linguistic backgrounds, through Wellbeing meetings, Student Support Group meetings, individual education plans and staged responses.
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EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed annually by teachers, parents and students and following significant incidents if they occur.

ENDORSEMENT:

Ratified by School Council on	19 / 11 / 2018
Due for review...	November 2019