



Child Safe Environment

POLICY

Mount Pleasant Road Primary School

A. Rationale:

A.1. The child safety 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.

B. Scope:

B.1. This policy applies to

- All staff, volunteers, contractors and whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people."

Specify when the policy will apply. For example:

B.2. This policy applies when

- Across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours. All partner organisations will be made aware of the policy and the school's underlying philosophy towards the care of children.

C. Aims:

C.1. MPRPS 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.

D. Statement of Commitment and Principles

D.1. Commitment to Child Safety Statement

E. Policy and Procedures

E.1. The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. The school's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found on the school website, Sentral Parent Portal, Staff Manual/School Policies including

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Commitment to Child Safety Statement
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations the following school policies. with additional documents below
- MPRPS Child Safe Risk Assessment
- MPRPS CHILD ABUSE REPORTING TEMPLATE
- Designate a Child Safety Officer that works with Leadership Team and Principal Class

E.2. The Child Safety Officer is a designated teacher who will

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety
- Liaise with the principal and school leaders 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
- 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 and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this
- 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
- 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

E.3. Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/ Statement of Values

- The Principal, Assistant Principal and Leadership Team 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.
- The school's Statement of Values sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The Statement of Values can be found on the website, Sentral Parent Portal, Staff Manual/School Policies

E.4. Human resources practices and training

- 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 and volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

E.5. 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's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the website, Sentral Parent Portal and Staff Manual/School Policies/Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy 2019.

E.6. 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.
- The school's approach to child safety risk reduction and management can be found on the in the following MPRPS Child Safe Risk Assessment.
- The MPRPS Child Safe Risk Assessment will be reviewed alongside the Safe Environments Policy. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, after any additional risks have been identified or a new risk management strategy or treatment has been employed.

E.7. 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.

E.8. 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.

E.9. Definitions

- Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

- **Child abuse**

- Child abuse includes:
 - any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence, or
 - an offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
 - the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm, and
 - 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**

- 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 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**
 - 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)

F. Evaluation:

- F.1.** This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's three year review cycle or as changes to regulations or circumstances require.

References:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotectobligation.aspx>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children.-families-and-young-people/child-protection/protecting-children-together>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children%2c-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children.-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>

Resources:

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_WarningsSignsSchoolStaff.pdf

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

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